

A Medalist's Story:
Steve Glink

At the age of twelve, I was diagnosed as an "insulin dependent diabetic." Back then, in 1967, they didn't call it type 1 diabetes. My fasting blood sugar was over 900 and I had lost 60 lbs. After a brief hospitalization to stabilize me, my parents were told that diabetes was such a serious condition that I would be lucky to see my 25th birthday. That news worried my mother until the day she died. When I was a teenager, we checked blood sugar with a "clini-stix" which turned colors to give you a very crude measurement of low, medium, or high. There was no glucometer; no glucagon; no pump.

Still, I lived a fairly typical teenager's life. I played three sports in high school. I was the class clown and was voted the wittiest student my senior year. After high school, I attended the University of Illinois where I had much fun there but never drank any alcohol or used any non-prescription drugs. I had to be careful about my health.

I was never a scholar, but I made it through law school and eventually got a job in the Cook County Public Defender's office where I defended homeless people accused of crimes. That job taught me a lot about life, and I loved being a voice for people who have none.

Eventually, I ended up in the world of school law, representing students, parents and staff and made a bit of a name for myself. I'm grateful that I've led a full life and had some special accomplishments that I recall with pride. Because of some of my high-profile school cause cases, I've been on the Oprah Winfrey Show and the Megyn Kelly show. I was voted as a Leading Lawyer in Illinois for school law from 2011 to the present. I was selected as a Father of the Year by the American Diabetes Association in 1992, and I've been a fundraiser for Joslin Diabetes Center. I have a wonderful and successful family.

I have lived for almost 52 years with type 1 diabetes in relatively good health. I attribute this to two things: (1) setting a steady and reasonable course — not too high and not too low and (2) great friends who really looked out for me as I was growing up. For all the good things in my life, I am grateful to people who support diabetes research and to the scientists and doctors who made that initial prognosis of 25 years was wrong by a long shot. **Thank you all!**

Support the Medalist Research Fund Today!

To make a gift to Joslin's Medalist Research Fund, please use the enclosed reply envelope and **make checks payable to Joslin Diabetes Center**. Please write "Medalist Research Fund" in the memo line.

You may also make your donation online by using our secure online portal at:
Joslin.org/medalistresearchfund

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A Celebration of Progress

It's hard to imagine a more powerful image of what diabetes research really means than the view of the main ballroom of the Royal Sonesta hotel in Cambridge on Saturday, May 4, when we held our 8th Medalist Celebration. More than 150 Joslin Medalists and another 150 guests filled the room with gratitude and hope.

To have so many people in one place whose lives have been directly impacted by the work of **Joslin Diabetes Center** was deeply gratifying. And to have so many people in one place who have faced this life-threatening disease with courage and determination was deeply inspiring.



Ruth Bakerman

Joslin Medalists are a unique set of people who contribute to the research on their condition and at the same time benefit from the resulting findings.

Attendees of the Medalist Celebration learned about the dramatic results of that remarkable feedback system.

Reports from researchers outlined progress on new treatments for diabetic vision loss, new methods for diagnosing and treating cardiovascular problems, advanced screening to identify cognitive issues, and progress to understand and prevent damage to kidneys caused by high blood sugar.

Attendees also learned that in many people with type 1 diabetes, insulin producing

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Robert Segal



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A Celebration of Progress

beta cells are still being generated, which means that if we can figure out how to halt the autoimmune response that destroys them, the body might repair itself to cure diabetes.

In all of these studies, Medalists who generously give their time and energy to provide data are directly contributing to progress. By studying how they have done so well, we can help others do as well, and help Medalists live even healthier lives in the future.

Joslin Diabetes Center recognized and honored the achievements of Medalists by presenting new milestone medals at the Celebration. We make special note that 75-year Medals were presented to **Lynn Wickwire** and **Robert Segal**. **Ruth Bakerman** received her 80-year medal!

It was wonderful to see the family members who came to witness Medalists' achievements, and celebrate their lives. The happy faces of children and grandchildren and great grandchildren of Medalists might just be the most vivid proof of the value of our mission.

Thank you to all who helped make the 8th Medalist Celebration such a wonderful event.

The 80-Year Roll is Growing Rapidly!

Only six years ago, in May of 2013, Joslin awarded the very first 80-year medal to **Spencer M. Wallace, Jr.** of Fayetteville, NY. Spencer was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at the age of eight years old in the early 1930s, when treatment with insulin was still new. His long life shows that with the right treatment, and with the courage to cope with diabetes every day, people can live full and fruitful lives. That is the inspiration Medalists give to all.

Medalists who have so generously opened their lives to researchers over the decades have played a key role in the steady progress to reduce the symptoms of type 1 diabetes and understand its underlying causes. They have helped us move closer to a true cure. And because of that progress, the number of people living 80 years or more has continued to grow. Since that first eight-decade medal in 2013, there are now a total of seventeen 80-year Medalists!

Congratulations to all our Medalists!



George L. King, MD

The Importance of Medalists to Diabetes Research Progress ...

As a diabetes researcher and clinician, I am grateful every day for the remarkable group of people we call the Joslin Medalists. There may not be another comparable group of long-term survivors of a serious disease like type 1 diabetes who are so generous about sharing their lives to further progress.

Medalists make an enormous difference. For example, at our Medalist Celebration in May, **Dr. Ward Fickweiler**, Research Fellow in Joslin's Section of Vascular Cell Biology and Beetham Eye Institute, gave Medalists an update on his research. Dr. Fickweiler studies diabetic retinopathy, which is the most common cause of vision loss among people with diabetes and a leading cause of blindness. He noted that it's surprising that many Medalists have only mild diabetic eye disease despite living with diabetes for 50 years. Some have **no** eye disease.

Dr. Fickweiler reported that we have found effective treatments to limit vision loss for many people with type 1 diabetes. We are developing new treatments that are less invasive and more universally successful. And by studying why some Medalists are protected against diabetic retinopathy, we hope to protect the vision of everyone who lives with diabetes.

In my own laboratory, we are working to understand the mechanism by which high blood sugar and insulin resistance cause vision loss, kidney damage and cardiovascular diseases. To have a group of people who have lived 25, 50, even 80 years with diabetes gives us remarkable opportunities to compare those who have suffered side-effects and those who haven't. Researchers of other diseases are envious that we have this ability to identify protective factors that prevent some Medalists from problems for so many years.

We are finding critical clues that will lead to new treatments and someday to a cure. This is why Medalists are so important to diabetes research and why I am always so proud and grateful to welcome Medalists to our annual celebration. My thanks go out to them, and to the **Thomas J. Beatson, Jr. Foundation** for sponsoring our Medalist Celebration. Together, we are making remarkable progress!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "George L. King".

George L. King, MD
Chief Scientific Officer