

A carer says thanks

Recently, NSW carer Tania Hayes decided she wanted to do something for those volunteers that provided – and still do provide – emotional and physical support for her husband Warren, whom she has cared for for 11 years.

Tania successfully nominated seven men from Martin Morris & Jones Real Estate in Wollongong for a Pride of Australia Medal for Mateship. In early October the men received the medal at a ceremony in Sydney. Their names are Phil Jones, Daniel Hastings, Michael Croghan, Geoff Jones, Alan Chaffers, Rob Aubin and Matthew Morgan.

Here is an excerpt from Tania's nomination form.

"In life, you often hear the saying, 'that when tragedy strikes, you learn who your true friends are.' And in 99 per cent of cases, where illness is concerned, friends often come and go. But for my husband Warren that couldn't be further from the truth.

The news of Warren's illness devastated the firm he worked for and from the moment he fell sick this firm rallied behind Warren, determined to stick by a mate in need.

On April 21, 1997 Warren's life was altered beyond recognition when he was struck down with a life threatening brain tumour at the age of 29. Immediately Warren's hopes and dreams for the future were turned upside down and he was immediately admitted into hospital where he spent a total of 446 days in hospital, during which time he underwent twenty operations, suffered from infected brain shunts, fungal and bacterial meningitis, golden staph, pneumonia, a deep vein thrombosis blood clot and spasmodic breathing which saw him rushed back onto life support. In a vegetative state the doctors suggested sending Warren to a nursing home so I discharged Warren and brought him home to become his full-time carer. Warren was now wheelchair bound, paralysed and unable to do the simplest of tasks that we all take for granted, let alone return to work.

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Each day for the 16 months that Warren was hospitalised, hardly a day went by where there wasn't a phone call, a visit to the hospital or a card encouraging Warren to continue to fight to survive. They paid him extra entitlements and even when Warren was released from hospital they again stood by his side helping find the right home and area for him to live in while at the same time making sure he had everything he needed for a fresh new start.

Determined to make sure that Warren was well catered for, they set about setting up a roster five days a week, to attend each afternoon to help with rehabilitation of trying to teach his body to learn to walk again. Eleven years on, their unbelievable dedication and support for their mate has continued to shine through and they still come around at 5.00 pm each evening. Each day Warren's wicked sense of humour emerges for a stir, and Warren is kept updated on the real estate market, followed by a beer to finish off. The love for a mate in his time of need has been simply amazing and has been a contributing factor to why Warren has been able to turn tragedy into triumph and regain his life."



Warren with his mates who received the Pride of Australia Medal for Mateship and Sarah Murdoch, guest medal presenter.