

Full Circle

For Jim Curtis '99, repaying a professor's kindness means passing it on

Tuesday, January 23, 2018



“THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I TALK ABOUT IS HAVING A FLEXIBLE MIND,” SAYS JIM CURTIS '99. “THAT’S SOMETHING I LEARNED FROM PROFESSOR ROSENFELD.” CURTIS ESTABLISHED A SCHOLARSHIP PAYING TRIBUTE TO DR. ROSENFELD’S KINDNESS AND POSITIVITY.

It was 1995, the summer after his freshman year at UNH, when Jim Curtis '99 woke up with numbness in his left foot. In the shower, he realized he couldn't feel either the heat of the water on his foot or the sensation of the water itself, but after a few cursory attempts at rousing the sluggish limb, he quickly pushed his incipient worry aside: he'd been riding his bicycle on the beach the

 SUBSCRIBE
TO THE UNH
TODAY
NEWSLETTER

 SUBSCRIBE
TO UNH TODAY
RSS

night before and fallen headfirst into the sand; possibly he'd pinched a nerve in his neck. It wasn't until a month later, when the numbness reached his thigh and he started having migraines that he mentioned his symptoms to his mother, an emergency room nurse; and it wasn't until a hastily arranged MRI revealed lesions on his spinal cord that Curtis confronted the gravity of his situation. "That was the point at which my story changed from frat guy-athlete to something else," he says.

Curtis had come to UNH as a swimming recruit, a nationally ranked freestyle sprinter. Within months of his first symptoms, he was experiencing debilitating pain and was rapidly losing the use of his right leg. In search of treatment, he took a leave of absence, and while none of the medical professionals he and his family consulted—neurologists at top hospitals from the Mayo Clinic to Johns Hopkins—could offer a diagnosis, they eventually succeeded in getting Curtis' progressive symptoms well enough controlled that he could resume his college education. He returned to UNH fitted with a PICC line—a catheter that ran from a vein in his arm to the top of his heart, delivering powerful medications to his bloodstream—and got around campus by motorcycle. He also tried to remember what he'd learned from communications professor Larry Rosenfield, one of the few people with whom he'd shared the extent of his health issues.

"Before I left, he told me everything was going to work out OK, and he said it in a way that had a profound impact on me," Curtis recalls. "He taught me to meditate and introduced me to the idea of mindfulness: focusing on just being present."

Rosenfield ultimately became one of what Curtis would come to call his Stimulati: "thought igniters" and healers who helped him

Tribute

find meaning in his illness and new mindsets that made his life more fulfilling. “For much of my life, I let my stories, specifically the ones around my illness and my sense of self, create my reality,” Curtis says. “When I finally got clear after practicing the lessons of the Stimulati, I could see what I was creating and chose to create a new story.”

After UNH, Curtis’ story

included a stint on Wall Street working as a trader on the American Stock Exchange, and a career in healthcare-focused digital media (among other companies, Curtis spent seven years at a then-new We

bMD). It’s also involved some literal storytelling. Since 2012, he’s been an executive at Remedy Health Media, an internet company dedicated to helping patients thrive in the face of illness that sees some 20 million visitors each month. Now the company’s president, he travels the country as a public speaker, sharing his own health journey. Earlier this year he published *The Stimulati Experience* about the same.

“The most important thing I talk about is having a flexible mind,” he says. “That’s something I learned from Professor Rosenfield.”

In 2011, he learned that Rosenfield had passed away. Initially “crushed” to learn he’d missed his chance to thank his former



Find out how you can establish a memorial scholarship fund to leave a lasting legacy in honor of someone special.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT TRIBUTE GIFTS](#)

teacher, he soon came around to an equally rewarding idea: paying Rosenfield's kindness and positivity forward to the next generation of UNH students. In December 2015, Curtis established the Dr. Lawrence Rosenfield Scholarship Fund, a current-use fund that provides one-time scholarships to students majoring in communications. "When I received a thank you letter from the first student to receive financial support in Dr. Rosenfield's name, I felt such an incredible warmth," he says. "His contributions had finally come full circle for me."

Lindsay Kosel '18 is the second student to receive the Rosenfield scholarship. She says the financial support has made a meaningful difference in her final year of college—and so has the recognition of her hard work and accomplishments at UNH. "It gave me the confidence that I've lacked, and helped me realize it's OK to be proud of the effort that I put into almost everything I do," she says. "It felt good to be proud of myself."

In other words, Rosenfeld's contributions have come full circle indeed.

WRITTEN [Kristin Waterfield Duisberg](#) | Communications and Public Affairs

PHOTOGRAPHER [Valerie Lester](#) | Communications and Public Affairs | valerie.lester@unh.edu | (603) 862-2632

DONORS

RELATED ARTICLES



December 15, 2021 | THE COLLEGE LETTER

Going Local



December 15, 2021 | THE COLLEGE LETTER

Rolling Up Our Sleeves



January 20, 2022 | COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

GeoBowl Winners



University of New Hampshire

UNH Today is produced for the UNH community and for friends of UNH.

The stories are written by the staff of **UNH Communications and Public Affairs**.

Email us: unhtoday.editor@unh.edu.

MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION **CONTACT US**



UNH Today • UNH Main Directory: 603-862-1234
Copyright © 2022 • TTY Users: 7-1-1 or 800-735-2964 (Relay NH)

[USNH Privacy Policies](#) • [USNH Terms of Use](#) • [ADA Acknowledgement](#)

