

A Giving Life by Matt Fry

Richard Donald Herschap was called from this world last Saturday morning, March 19, 2011. Donald may have left this physical life here but his memory, legacy and positive impact will not soon be forgotten. The story that unfolded in the last hours of his life is all too generous and inspiring to go untold.

Donald suffered a massive stroke that rendered him lifeless and in an inoperable state. Donald was a successful businessman, and leader that impacted much of west Texas as well as his home town of Rocksprings. As the family faced the grim news, they had decisions to make that no one wants to ever have to face. After all options had been exhausted the family chose, on his behalf to donate his organs. They truly believed that with Donald's giving attitude this would have been his wish. Dick and Pat Herschap have always promoted a giving spirit they live by and instilled in their children. When the decision was made Dick instantly remembered a conversation he had with Terry McMillan at the feed store some time back involving Terry's brother Scott and the state of his illness. You see Scott needed a liver transplant and without one there was little doctors could do. Dick recalled this conversation and instantly began efforts to contract the McMillan's. Hours were spent on the phone to Doctors and hospitals just to get to begin the process to see if there was by chance a way the two were compatible. Over long drawn out hours they were informed in fact the two were a perfect match. Scott McMillan lived in Mason, Texas where he had one daughter who was a friend of my wife. This gave her a way to communicate with the Herschaps and show her gratitude for their thoughtfulness. The first text message to be relayed to the Herschap family from Scott's daughter was received Saturday morning as they prepared Scott for surgery.

"You have no idea how thankful I am for ya'll. Every night when I say my prayers I break down when I get to the part about a miracle for Dad. I honestly never imagined this was going to turn out like this. Ya'll are amazing and I can't thank ya'll enough"

Scott entered surgery around noon, we were informed it would take four to eight hours. He would be in recovery for a day, and could be in ICU for several days. That afternoon in about four hours we received word he was out of surgery and all went perfectly. This is the next message the Herschaps received from his daughter after surgery.

"Words cannot describe how thankful I am that ya'll have allowed me to keep my Dad"

Scott was moved from recovery and into ICU that evening. The following Sunday he was moved into a private room way ahead of the highest expectations.

The funeral services were held that Sunday in Fort Stockton. Scott's daughter Morgan McMillan traveled to be with the Herschaps on that emotional day. The sadness of losing someone that meant so much to so many was hard, but being able to see the positive effects that lived on provided hope. The family received a list of other recipients and their ages who received other organs. Scott McMillan is home in Mason and doing well in less than one week of the surgery.

Over the last several years I have become very close with the Herschap family and their never ending generosity. I believe the story truly tells of a "never ending generosity" as Donald lives on in the lives of others. The hurt of losing a family member, friend, and leader can never be completely healed. Donald's and his family's numerous acts of generosity will live on with the memories we all have, and the good times we shared. As I said in the beginning a story like this cannot go untold. It was an honor to be asked to convey this story on behalf of the Herschap family. It was also an honor to have known Donald Herschap and the life changing impact he had and will continue to have, on those who knew him and in some cases those who never did.