

Emily Teasdale

Diagnosed: September 1998

Hobbies: Cycling and Gardening

I learned how to ride a bike for the first time when I was 30 years old. I still have the gravel in my knee to prove it from the very first attempt. Years later, I restarted bike riding with my husband, Tom, as something we could do together. This was after my diagnosis, but not a result of it. We tried out a tandem and fell in love with it right from the start. We lived in Houston at the time and were naturally drawn to the Bike MS 150 from Houston to Austin. We've been riding ever since and have participated in 11 MS Rides. Our first Oklahoma Bike MS was in 2007. I plan to be cycling for many more years.



Bouts with optic neuritis during the early 1990's prompted an ophthalmologist to introduce the term "MS" to me. However, there were no medications available, so I did not seek a definite diagnosis. Instead, we managed. In 1998, I had a relapse with difficulty walking and I was not making sense when I spoke. A physician friend encouraged Tom to take me to a doctor as soon as possible. The first of three neurologists made an "incidental finding" of a small cyst in the 3rd ventricle of my brain. That doctor wanted to surgically remove the cyst, as did the second doctor. Three doctors and several MRI's later, I had a diagnosis I could accept – MS.

I was immediately started on the disease modifying medication Copaxone. In 2002 the cyst in my brain had doubled in size and the decision was made to remove it. The surgery was successful, although it triggered a bad MS relapse. Since then, I've gone through a great deal of speech therapy for problems caused partially by the MS and partially by the surgery.

Moving to Oklahoma City was challenging because we left our entire support system of friends and family behind, and essentially we were starting all over. Dr. Pardo and the National MS Society were of great help when we came here and have continued to be over the past several years.

I am learning how to be retired with this disability (actually because of this disability), because in reality I would still like to be working. At one time I wanted to rule the world by myself, and I found out that I couldn't. Though I still love traveling, I enjoy being closer to home now and spending time with family and friends. I just really enjoy having people around me.

We have begun documenting our adventures since my diagnosis on our website called "Emily and Tom at Work and Play" (www.teasdaleokc.us). This is just one more way to share my story and raise awareness about MS, because people need to hear about it. People really need to know. Your willingness to participate in the MS Ride is awesome. I'd like to help you however I can.