No stranger to pain, Terry's still going

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Plucky Simon Fraser student Terry Fox wins place in Canadian (and University) history...
Terry Fox

By Dennis Roberts

Terry Fox, courageous one-legged Simon Fraser University student running across Canada to raise money for cancer research, has won a place in the hearts of all Canadians — and earned an important place in SFU history.

It has been proposed the University establish a prize to honor Fox. The Terry Fox Gold Medal will be awarded annually to the student who makes an outstanding or heroic contribution to humanity.

Fox is fast on his way to becoming one of Canada's greatest folk heroes. He began his marathon in Newfoundland in April. Not too many people paid attention in the beginning and he suffered from bouts of flu and food poisoning. In Quebec he was snubbed by an official of the cancer society. He might have wondered: was it all really worthwhile? But he kept on — and then the news media awoke to the fact that this young student (he was 22 in July) really meant business.

Crowds of people began turning out to greet Fox. The tears mixed with cheers, said one commentator. The dollars began pouring in.

Terry Fox was 18 and attending SFU when he lost his right leg to cancer.

He was halfway through the season with the University's freshman basketball team when he became concerned about a pain in his knee. He thought it would go away, but he woke up one morning and could hardly walk.

Four days later the leg was amputated above the right knee. Then he underwent chemotherapy treatment for 18 months to kill the deadly cells of cancer still in his leg.

And Terry Fox began fighting back. He read about an amputee marathon runner in New York. It was then he decided he would run again.

"I had this dream," he said later. "Really, it was more of a fantasy than a dream, about running across Canada. At the time I didn't know if I'd ever walk again, let alone run."

He wanted to prove that cancer can be beaten. With new drugs and new treatments, he feels that the odds are changing cancer from a deadly disease to a curable one. He began training — and facing problems.

Nearly a year before his marathon run he was interviewed in SFU WEEK and described how he tried modifying his artificial leg for running. He said:

"The knee rusted out from perspiration one time. And another time the foot dropped off."

Fox began a program of weight-training for general conditioning and strength. His running partner Doug Alward (who has been accompanying him across Canada) worked out with him on the jogging trails on a regular basis.

Terry Fox paid tribute at the time to SFU people. He said:

"I've got to say how great the people have been up here — especially in physio. They're always trying to help me work things out, trying to devise improvements to the leg, making suggestions on how I can do things better."

Terry Fox still has trouble with his artificial leg. Some medical people have expressed concern over the stump of his amputated leg; others are worried that he could damage his left knee. But Terry has rejected any suggestion

Donations to the Terry Fox fund may be left at any branch of the Royal Bank or at Woodward's Stores or sent directly to the Canadian Cancer Society, 955 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 3X8. Cheques should be made payable to the "Canadian Cancer Society (Terry Fox Fund)".
...Plucky student will be honored by his university

that he give up.

Moira Farrow of the Vancouver Sun was sent out to interview him and she wrote: "Terry Fox is not just running across Canada on one leg — he's running his way into the hearts and minds of all Canadians."

Dennis Kucherawy of the London Free Press spoke of the runner's courage, dedication, perseverance, stamina, commitment and generosity and said of people watching him: "Clearly visible in their eyes was the spark of inspiration that only heroes are capable of stirring in the young. And we all know how rare heroic examples are today."

The Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows The News has asked its readers to contribute to Terry's fight against cancer. An editorial read: "As time winds down in this run toward immortality, Terry Fox has earned himself a spot in the hearts of all those who understand a dream."

Fox knows that some entrepreneurs have been trying to use him for promotions and endorsements and he has said "no" to all their ideas.

"I won't let anyone use me to promote anything else but cancer research," he said in early August.

Simon Fraser will contribute to the hero's welcome when Fox eventually reaches the west coast.

It seems sad that in 1980 much needed money for research to find the cure for diseases that still elude us should, in a way, be dependent on a young man torturing himself day in and day out.

Terry Fox faces the risk of permanent injury, we have been told, and we do not wish to see his young life ruined. If Terry Fox ended his run today he would be no less a hero in our eyes.

We feel he has done sufficient already to become the first recipient of the Terry Fox Gold Medal.