

Heart transplant record holder dies of cancer

August 11 2009, By JAMES HANNAH , Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- A heart transplant recipient who lived a record 31 years with a single donated organ has died at age 51 of cancer, his heart still going strong, his widow said.

Tony Huesman died Sunday night.

"He had diabetes and [cancer](#)," Carol Huesman said Monday. "His heart - believe it or not - held out. His heart never gave up until the end, when it had to give up."

Huesman (HYOOS'-mun) got a heart transplant in 1978 at Stanford University. That was just 11 years after the world's first heart transplant was performed in South Africa.

He became the longest-living American recipient of a single transplanted heart in 2000, when a patient who had received a transplant a year before him had to undergo a second transplant.

At his death, Huesman was listed as the world's longest survivor of a single transplanted heart both by Stanford and the Richmond, Va.-based United Network for Organ Sharing.

"I'm living proof a person can go through a life-threatening illness, have the operation and return to a productive life," Huesman told the Dayton Daily News in 2006.

He worked as marketing director at a sporting-goods store.

Huesman was diagnosed with cardiomyopathy while in high school. His heart, attacked by a pneumonia virus, was almost four times its normal size from trying to pump blood with weakened muscles.

Huesman's sister, Linda Huesman Lamb, also was stricken with [cardiomyopathy](#) and received a heart transplant in 1983. The two were the nation's first brother and sister [heart transplant](#) recipients. She died in 1991 at age 29.

Huesman founded the Huesman Heart Foundation in Dayton, which seeks to reduce [heart disease](#) by educating children and offers a nursing scholarship in honor of his sister.

"He touched a lot of lives," Carol Huesman said.

©2009 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: Heart transplant record holder dies of cancer (2009, August 11) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-08-heart-transplant-holder-dies-cancer.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--