

Oct. 13, 2007

Dear Friends:

We are writing you this letter with a story and a request. Please give us a moment of your valuable time to read it.

THE SECRET KILLER

On August 2, 2007 our son, **Paul H. Marek**, complaining of shortness of breath and a feeling of extreme malaise, entered the Our Lady of Lourdes hospital in Camden, New Jersey. Paul called his parents assuring them that he was all right and that his father should go on to Sweden for a two week stint of teaching and his mother and older brother should not rush to the hospital, but should stay in touch by phone. Angela, Paul's wife of only two years and Michaela, his 17-year-old daughter, were always at his side.

Paul was diagnosed with **interstitial pneumonia** in both lungs. He had had pneumonia twice before and recovered well. He was a healthy 48 year old, a non-smoker and diet-conscious. His condition worsened steadily and he was put into a medically induced coma on a ventilator. His doctors stated that he had ARDS (Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome), a condition that we had never heard of. You can get more information about this at: <http://ardsusa.org/>

It seems that the medical profession knows very little about this condition, for they were not able to find a source of infection, either viral or bacterial. One doctor informed us that the mortality rate is 100%, which was true a short time ago, but now some patients survive. The only treatment is the coma to allow the body's immune system to try to fight off the disease. It may be an autoimmune disease.

Paul, his family, all the doctors and nurses, and his many friends and colleagues fought for him heroically. The families of ARDS victims often compare their experience to a roller-coaster ride. For example, on Paul's birthday, Aug. 24th, we got a call to rush back to the hospital to say goodbye. When we arrived, his numbers were better that they had been for several days. Despite this battle, Paul slipped away on Aug. 30th, 2007 at 6:00 AM. There was a memorial service at the Park Lane Hotel attended by family and friends on Sept. 7, 2007 featuring a video about Paul and short testimonials from friends and colleagues from the Realogy Corporation, where Paul was a vice president of acquisitions.

Our family has been devastated by our incalculable loss. As a part of the healing process we are resolved to organize a benefit concert to be performed by professional soloists and the orchestra and chorus from the **Mannes College of Music**, conducted by Nicholas Fox, to raise awareness of ARDS and to help fund research efforts. We chose the Brahms Requiem because it alone, among the major requiems, offers a text that offers consolation and hope to mourners. An excerpt, *Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit, (You now have sorrow, but you shall again see me and your heart shall be joyful.)* can be seen on this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sy4ombfbESg>

PLEASE OPEN THE ENCLOSED ATTACHMENT

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- Purchase tickets for family and friends. The suggested contribution is \$25 but we will be glad to accept larger donations. Please make out checks to The ARDS Foundation, Memo - The Paul H. Marek Memorial Concert and send them, along with a stamped self-addressed envelope to The ARDS Foundation, % Marek, 210 W. 101st. St., #10F, NYC, 10025. We will send you tickets by return mail.
- If you know of potential donors from corporations or individuals, please inform us. All donations over the basic ticket price will receive program credit. The ARDS Foundation is a tax-deductible organization.
- Please forward our information to whomever you think would be interested.
- Print out the enclosed poster and display it wherever it is appropriate.
- If you have mailing lists of individuals that you feel would be interested in our concert, please let us know. Churches and synagogues are examples.
- Brochures about ARDS are available from The ARDS Foundation at the above link. Inform people about this vicious syndrome. Our information is that this syndrome is growing but the research for a cure has made little progress.
- Consider fund raising on your own. There are ideas available from The ARDS Foundation.

THANK YOU
The Marek Family