



Here at ATU Local 1587, we have a wonderful friend and brother, and his name is **Milan**.

Milan has always been a strong, kind-hearted and thoughtful member of his union, and has always been supportive of his brothers and sisters.

It is clear that this support is reciprocated, as his friends have never left his side.

His story is so important to all of us, and his wife Zaga would like to share it with everyone.



We would like to thank Zaga for sharing her story, and for sharing such an amazing friend and brother with all of us.

With all our Love, Respect, and In Solidarity,

Your Sisters and Brothers of ATU Local 1587



Written by Zaga Poznan

My name is Zaga Poznan, and I am Milan's wife of almost 44 years. We met in the fall of 1970 on campus at the University of Belgrade in Serbia (at that time Yugoslavia). We fell in love - probably at first sight - and have been that way all these years. In 1972, we moved to Canada.

What I love about my husband the most are his eyes because they are truly the windows into his heart and soul. He was and still is a gentle giant, personified. The man does not have a mean bone in his body. He loves everyone and gives people a lot more leeway than most of us would. I have not yet met anyone who does not like my husband.



Oct.1, 2008, was the day the doctors pronounced Milan's diagnosis. Milan had ALS. That was the day I mourned my husband's death. Time stopped; our world changed completely and the constant heartache moved in. Today, Milan is in a long term healthcare facility. Every day I am losing him one day at a time and there is nothing anyone can do to stop it or reverse it.

ALS shattered all our plans for a peaceful, relaxed and joyful retirement. It also took away the pleasure of helping our only daughter with her infant son. It put unforeseen financial burden on our family and despite taking away some of our friends, this disease has also introduced me to some amazing new ones.

For me, the hardest part was getting used to living alone (which I did not do since my 20's). It brought health issues related to a tremendous amount of stress but also gave me the strength and resolve to go forward and do all that I can to help Milan live a dignified existence.

The one thing that I have learned from Milan and his seven years of living with ALS is that you do not know how much you love life until you are on the brink of death. Also, no one should have the right to decide someone else's faith, as long as that person has the smallest chance to communicate their own wishes. Milan, in spite of the debilitating effects of ALS on his body and mind still believes and hopes that a cure will be found. He wakes up every morning with a smile and hope on his face and in his heart. He and I both believe in the power of the human mind and hope that there is somewhere in this world a brilliant scientist working fervently to decode the mystery of ALS!

I have witnessed positive attitude and a load of love and care can be an amazing weapon in the fight against this awful disease. I have found that compassionate healthcare works miracles; a kind word, a gentle hand and a sunny day without a wind brings so much joy to my husband.

For all of those other wives/husbands out there going through this awful journey, I just want to say to be prepared that it may be a long and difficult battle - a battle that you will not want to take alone. Accept help from your family and friends. And know that you are not alone.

Respectfully,

Zaga Poznan