

2001 Allianz Caregiver of the Year Award

Allianz Canada is pleased to announce that Marguerite Evans of Don Mills, Ontario is the recipient of the 2001 Allianz Canada Caregiver of the Year Award. Christian Cassebaum, President and CEO of Allianz Canada, explains that the purpose of the Award is to "honour all caregivers and offer recognition and thanks for their immeasurable contribution to our society."

This year's honouree is a perfect example of someone who has not only contributed to those dear to her, but who has also found the time and spirit to bring her energies to the community at large. A petite 76-year old, Don Mills resident and Grey Power customer Marguerite Evans has been an inspiration to all who know her story.

When Marguerite was a young mother, her husband Stephen developed Huntington Disease (HD). HD is an inherited debilitating disease that has emotional, cognitive, and physical effects. Symptoms include uncontrollable shaking, a staggering gait, and dramatic mood swings. There is no cure for Huntington Disease. Marguerite acted as her husband's caregiver for the 17 years he lived with the disease, taking responsibility for his feeding, bathing, and other daily needs – a responsibility she met with grace, a positive attitude, and amazing energy. Throughout the course of this very personal trial, Marguerite still found time to volunteer for others.

In 1994, Stephen succumbed to HD. Marguerite's grief was compounded that same year when two of her children developed symptoms of the disease. Marguerite had both children move in with her to live under her care. In the years since, Marguerite's other three children have also developed symptoms of Huntington Disease, and rely extensively on their mother.

In nominating Marguerite for the award, Nancy Webb, the Director of the Toronto Huntington Disease Resource Centre said "Her courage and indomitable spirit are awe-inspiring. When you watch her...you can't help but be inspired to try a little harder or complain a little less." With her characteristic generosity and wit, Marguerite responded, "Oh, Nancy, I don't need an award." Allianz Canada hopes that the \$10,000 from the Award will help Marguerite continue to care for her children.

Regional winners for the 2001 Allianz Canada Caregiver's Award are Ethel Pilgrim from St. Anthony, Newfoundland and Labrador; Lawrence B. Clifford from Pointe Claire, Quebec; Dennis McHugh from Ferintosh, Alberta; and Sheila Ellen Lee, Victoria, British Columbia.

Allianz Canada is now accepting nominations for the 2002 Award. Winners will be announced in November 2002. If you wish to nominate a caregiver, please provide a testimonial of 500 words or less describing the circumstances and the recipient. For criteria and more details, write to Allianz Canada, Awards Program, 10 York Mills Road, Suite 700, Toronto, Ontario, M2P 2G5, or visit the website at www.allianz.ca.