

Monday, December 27, 2004



CALGARY SINCE 1884 HERALD



About CalgaryHerald.com | **S** = subscriber only content

Welcome, Garry C

CLASSIFIEDS

- Find a job
- Find a car
- Find a home
- Obituaries
- Shopping
- Personals
- Find an ad
- Place an ad

IN THE HERALD

- News
- Letters
- The Editorial Page
- City & Region
- Entertainment
- Taste
- Life at Home
- Sports
- Observer
- Business
- New Homes
- New Condos
- Newspaper Ads
- Weekly Sections:**
- Driving
- Faith & Reason
- Life at Home
- Neighbours
- Observer
- Taste
- Travel
- Columnists
- Headline Scan
- Online Extras
- Sound Off!
- 7-Day Archive
- Appointment Notices

ELECTRONIC EDITION

YOUR HERALD

- Subscribe
- Help
- Send us a news tip
- Letters:
- To the editor
- About your event
- Site Feedback
- Advertising
- About Us
- Contact Us
- Services



- CALGARY
- Calgary city site
- Calgary Herald
- Global Calgary
- Calgary Flames
- Stampeders

CITY & REGION

Transplant survivor honoured by Guinness

Lung recipient beats doctors' odds to care for ill wife

Sean Myers

Calgary Herald

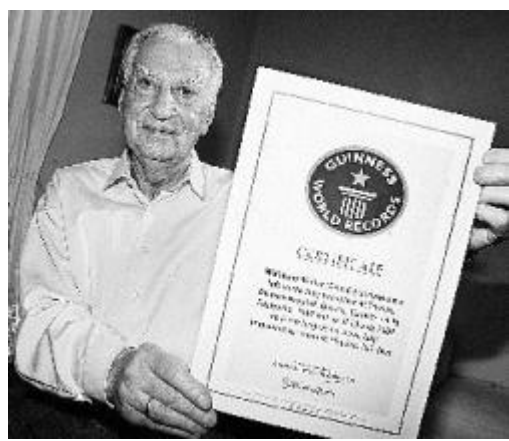
Sunday, December 26, 2004

In the summer of 1987, Wolfgang Muller was given two large oxygen tanks and told by his doctors he would die if his left lung wasn't replaced by the time the tanks were empty.

Well into the second oxygen tank, a lung was found to replace the diseased organ, which was rapidly shutting down in his chest.

"Before I went on the table, the doctors told me there was a 50-50 chance I would wake up again and then there was a 50-50 chance I would live a day or two," says Muller. "At best, I might live a year or maybe more."

Last week, Muller received a certificate from the Guinness Book of Records confirming he is the longest living survivor of a



CREDIT: Dean Bicknell, Calgary Herald
Wolfgang Muller holds up his Guinness World Records Certificate for being the longest-surviving lung transplant recipient, at 16 years and 307 days as of July 19, 2004. Muller, 70, still plays table tennis and walks daily.

ADVERTISEMENT

96% of our students would recommend Athabasca University to others.

Athabasca University
Canada's Open University

1.866.514.8381 athabascau.ca

lung transplant. The official certificate reads that as of July 19, 2004, Muller had lived 16 years and 307 days after his operation on Sept. 15, 1987.

Hitmen
 Roughnecks
 Event Listings
 Sports Events
 Live Music
 Movies
 Restaurants
 Bars
 Contests
 Sound Off!

tonight on Global	
7:00 PM	Great Taste, No Money
7:30 PM	Entertainment Tonight
8:00 PM	Zoe Busiek: Wild Card
9:00 PM	On Wings and Dreams
10:00 PM	Las Vegas
full listings: TVtimes	

Muller received the certificate only after all the dates and medical information could be verified.

In the fall of 1987, the German-born Calgarian travelled to the Toronto General Hospital, where the operation was performed by the Toronto Lung Transplant Group led by Dr. Joel Cooper, who had performed the world's first successful single-lung transplant in 1983 and the first double-lung transplant three years later.

Although the majority of Cooper's transplant patients were alive at the time of Muller's surgery, it was still a relatively new technique and some patients had died within days of the operation. But Muller was determined to survive.

"My wife had muscular dystrophy and I thought, 'I'm going to have to live to look after her,' " said Muller. "I didn't want to go yet."

Muller turned 70 on Dec. 4 and remains a spry and active senior. He has travelled as far as Hungary, Japan and Australia to compete in the World Transplant Games, an Olympic-style competition for transplant recipients which runs every two years. He's won a handful of medals in table tennis and has competed in the five-kilometre walk event.

His first wife succumbed to her illness seven years ago, and one of the couple's three children also died of muscular dystrophy.

Muller has since remarried and continues to exercise "just about" every day. He goes for daily walks and regularly plays table tennis with a club at the University of Calgary.

"I died twice during the operation, they had to revive me," said Muller. "I've had 17 years I wasn't supposed to have. I've travelled everywhere I wanted to go and lived a lot since the surgery."

Muller said he wants to encourage others to fill out donor cards because more organs are needed.

Health Canada says 150 Canadians die every year waiting for transplant organs that don't come in time.

"I filled out my card on my licence," said Muller. "They can have anything they can use when I go."

smyers@theherald.canwest.com

© The Calgary Herald 2004