



Terry Fox

For one magnificent summer, an entire nation ran stride for painful stride with a young man whose desire was to run across Canada to raise money for cancer research, and in doing so, to meet the challenge of the disease that took his leg. Terry Fox did that, calling his dream the Marathon of Hope and uniting a nation around a common cause. And although the cancer he so bravely fought took his life, his legacy was just the beginning. Today hundreds of millions of dollars have been raised globally for cancer research through The Terry Fox Run, held across Canada and around the world.

Even at an early age, his dreams seemed bigger than his ability to achieve them. In Grade 8 he worked hard to make his school basketball team, and, despite his small size, accomplished the task. Terry was only 18 when he was diagnosed with osteogenic sarcoma (a rare bone cancer) and was forced to have his right leg amputated 15 centimetres above the knee in 1977. He learned to wear an artificial leg and began a grueling 16-month course of chemotherapy.

More than a survivor, Terry took on the task of being a role model and inspiration. In 1979, he began training to run across Canada. After 18 months and over 5,000 kilometres of hard work, Terry started his run in St. John's, Newfoundland on April 12, 1980. He dipped his artificial leg in the harbor and began his journey with a donated camper van driven by his best friend Doug and little fanfare. Through the summer of 1980, Terry's familiar, halting gait took him through Canada's Atlantic provinces, Québec and into Ontario. Incredibly, Terry averaged close to a marathon – 42 kilometres – every day for 143 days and 5,373 kilometres. Enthusiasm grew and the money collected along the way began to mount. Sadly, on September 1, 11 kilometres outside Thunder Bay, Terry was forced to stop running because cancer had appeared in his lungs. He passed away on June 28, 1981 at age 22, but not before realizing his dream of raising \$1 for every Canadian - \$24.17 million.

Today the Terry Fox Foundation continues Terry's work, supporting cure-oriented, biomedical cancer research worldwide. In 2007, the Foundation created The Terry Fox Research Institute to overcome barriers of discipline and geography in conducting cancer research. And millions of people around the world carry on Terry's Marathon of Hope by taking part in The Terry Fox Run.

Terry's courage and resolve have been recognized globally. Among a long list of honours, he became the youngest recipient of the Companion of the Order of Canada. An 83-kilometre stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway near Thunder Bay was re-named Terry Fox Courage Highway in his honour and a bronze statue stands close to where he ended his run. He received the Lou Marsh Award in 1980, was voted Canada's Greatest Hero in 1999, and is part of Canada Post's Millennium Collection of influential Canadians.