



Moscow Resident Participated in Truck Convoy

Barry Owen of Moscow (center) is pictured with two Special Olympics Tennessee athletes, Michelle Greenway and Kevin Donaldson. An army of compassionate truckers, escorted by a host of Tennessee law enforcement officers, took over the highways in Nashville on September 18th to raise awareness and funds for Special Olympics as part of The World's Largest Truck Convoy. The 91 rigs in Nashville were among an estimated several thousand trucks that took part in convoys for Special Olympics in 38 cities in 27 states and provinces on September 18th. Anyone interested in sponsoring or being in the World's Largest Truck Convoy next year can call Jean Jenkins at 615-329-1375 ext. 23 or email her at sotnvp@aol.com.

Barry Owen: One Trucker Who Just Won't Quit

Barry Owen's family has always driven trucks. His dad drove a truck and was killed in a truck wreck when Barry was 12 years old. Barry and his baby brother, who was 8 years old at the time, were riding with their father when they hit a cow just 20 miles from home. The cow got under the semi causing the crash that threw Barry out of the truck and his brother onto the floorboard. The accident crushed his dad.

Barry was raised on a farm in Moscow and drove his first truck hauling grain when he was 16. After he graduated he began hauling cotton for the same farmer his dad was hauling for when he had the accident that killed him.

Barry remembers the date and time of the horrible incident that left him a paraplegic. "November 19, 1981 at 2:30 p.m.," recalls Barry. "I was 22 years old and engaged to be married when I had the accident. My fiancé remained committed to our relationship even though she knew the next day that I was paralyzed."

The accident, just five miles from Barry's home, left him paralyzed from the waist down. "I couldn't feel my legs," says Barry. "I grabbed my knee and couldn't feel anything so I thought my legs had been cut off." "I rubbed my hands over the area of where my legs were and didn't feel any blood so I

knew my legs were still there." It wasn't until he was pulled from his truck that he had excruciating pain in his back. Barry and his fiancé were married on December 31 in spite of the accident and the diagnosis that he would never walk again.

On September 24 of this year, just one week after the World's Largest Truck Convoy, Barry who is 45 years old, has spent one half of his life in a wheelchair. Barry stated, "My wife keeps me going. Because she has sacrificed so much I don't want her to have to miss out on things she would have had if she had married a normal man." Barry and Kathy and have two

lovely children, Molly age 17 and Katie age 15, born July 7.

While Joan Jenkins, the Vice President of Marketing and Development for Special Olympics, spoke with Barry on the phone, a truck driver by the name of Mike who drives for Big Lake Transportation stopped and insisted on washing Barry's windshield and buying him dinner. Thirty minutes later another trucker asks to help him out of his truck. Barry said he doesn't ask for or expect help, but appreciates the kindness offered to him.

Joan Jenkins knows first hand about the determination and generosity of truckers. "Truckers are just like that, big hearted and determined. My dad is a retired owner operator and I've been around trucks all my life. As a teen I could tell the difference between a Cummings, Detroit, and Caterpillar engine just by listening to the sound. Truckers and the big rigs they drive are an important part of our country's economy and culture."

Barry said that being a paraplegic is 25% physical and 75% mental. So it's all about attitude. "Don't dwell on what you can't do, focus on what you can do. You'll be surprised at what you can do if you just try," says Barry. Barry doesn't know how much longer he will be able to drive a truck, but plans to continue to work and take care of his family after his truck driving career is over. He is a fascinating and inspiring man who shows us that it's your ability, not your disability that determines what you can do.

Barry has driven well over 1,000,000 miles and currently drives for Promise Transportation. He participated in the World's Largest Truck Convoy for Special Olympics held in Nashville on September 18 and had his truck on display for people to see the modifications made to allow him to drive with his disability. It's very fitting for Barry to be a part of this event for Special Olympics. Special athletes and Barry Owen definitely have two things in common, courage and determination.