

Mike King

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years now. Dad and mom started to farm there when they got married. I have four brothers. My oldest brother is Rodney. He is a year and a half older than myself. He's living in Saratoga, Florida. I'm second. My name is Mike. Curt is next to me. He is 24. Next to him is Ken who is 22. And Wendall is the youngest. He'll be turning 16 in a couple of days, which he is glad for.

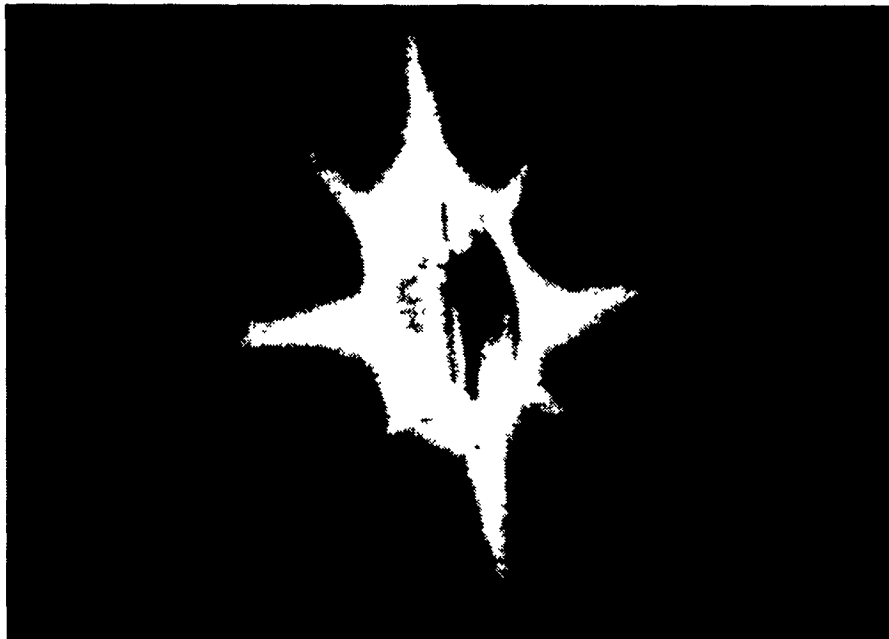
Q. You grew up on a family farm, active, strong, able to do all kinds of things and able to get things done. Then you had your motorcycle accident. That left you paralyzed from the waist down. What went through your mind as it started to dawn on you that you may have some physical limitations?

A. Well I was thinking right away I will no longer keep the same goals or do the same things that I wanted to do in my mind at that time. I graduated from high school in 1976. And, you know, a normal kid I guess going through high school playing as many sports as I could, and still helping out Dad here at home on the farm. Sports was definitely in my blood—in our family. We all enjoyed base ball, soccer, the whole thing. And I worked construction for two years after graduation before my cycle accident. At the time I left on my cycle trip I was planning to go into business with Dad on the dairy farm after I got back. The cycle accident changed those plans. I thought that everything, you know, life, was over. Mom and Dad were going to take care of me from now on, as long as I lived. That's what I was thinking during most of the time in the hospital. (I spent two and a half months at E-town Rehab, once I got out of Hershey Medical Center where they did my back surgery). At home they had to take me upstairs to the bedroom and bring me down in the morning. There was no bathroom on the first floor that I could get into and that kind of thing. That's what I was thinking that life was going to be like for me. It was frustrating.

But we decided to build an addition onto the house, which has my bedroom and bathroom and the garage attached to it. It started to give me the realization of what I was going to be able to do on my own too. Being able to get in and out of the house myself then. Having the garage right next to it. I got hand controls on my car and found out how to drive by the use of hand controls without my legs. I had a Chevy Blazer at the time, and I didn't really think it was possible for me to get up in that myself. At first I had one of my brothers pick me up out of the chair and put me in the driver seat. And they would put the chair in and I always had to have someone with me. I started lifting weights to increase my upper body strength. I said, "Man if I'm strong enough to get in and out of bed and pick myself up when I spill out of my chair on the floor, I can get into this truck, too." So I found a way to get into my van and later on how to pull the chair in behind me. To do new things became a challenge to me. I told Dad I wanted to still be able to help out on the farm with what I could. Although with the setup we have at home there is no way that I can milk cows. We had hydrostatic tractors at that time, and I found out that as long as someone got me up on the tractor I could drive the thing. We had a lot of field work in the spring and in the fall with putting the harvest in. So I was able to help out with that. And realizing, you know, more and more that I could do it.

At first it was really frustrating because our family and myself had no idea what it was going to be like. We all had the idea for the first couple months that everybody

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