

Halloran

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board already. We took him there for a gym swim, but he just took to the water," Ed, Sr., said, reflecting on those cherished memories. Eddie began swimming competitively when he was 8.

His father is still amazed at how much Eddie wanted to attend Misericordia. It was the first school they looked at, his father said, and it was Eddie's first choice.

"I was ecstatic to get him," said Nancy Edkins, Misericordia swimming coach.

"Very quickly as a freshman, Eddie emerged as a team leader," Nancy said. He led by example and quickly earned the respect of teammates.

As a dedicated member of the team, Nancy said, Eddie was not only concerned about how he performed but what was best for the team. "He swims if he doesn't feel well, if he's hurt. He's just such a team leader."

Eddie holds two pool records at Misericordia and is a member of the record relay team. Nancy said he is one of the highest all point scorers at Misericordia with only two years of competition.

Eddie is a physical therapy major at College Misericordia, one of the college's most demanding programs. His father picks up an old issue of The Dallas Post and proudly points Eddie's name out as a dean's list student at Misericordia. Eddie had worked very hard spring semester to bring up his grade point average (GPA), his father said. He earned a 3.9 GPA.

"I had three back surgeries and he saw how bad I was. He used to go with me when I would go for treatments. He thought he would like to help people," Ed, Sr. said. That was why his son became interested in physical therapy. "He saw how they were helping me and he figured that was what he wanted to do."

Eddie was planning to go into the Air Force after he graduated from College Misericordia to further his education. His other idea was to perhaps pursue a

career in sports medicine.

But on a Wednesday night in June, all of Eddie's plans would change.

His father was starting to cook dinner when the phone rang. It was a friend of Eddie's and fellow lifeguard. "She was in a panic and said, 'Ed was in an accident. Ed was in an accident,'" Ed, Sr. remembers.

It was the phone call every parent dreads. His father said, "How can he be in an accident; he's at work? He's at the pool. I thought of a car accident. She said, no something happened at the pool and he can't breathe, he isn't breathing at all."

In a panic, his parents got in their car and drove to Francis Slocum. At first, they could not get into the swimming pool area because of all the paramedics and the preparations being made to move Eddie to Scranton by helicopter.

His parents drove to Scranton's Community Medical Center, but the facility is very limited for treating spinal cord injuries. The decision was made that Eddie needed treatment from specialists at Thomas Jefferson Memorial Hospital in Philadelphia.

His parents found neighbors to care for their dog threw a few clothes in a bag, and made the longest ride anyone will ever make to Philadelphia. They have been at Eddie's side since that day.

Both of Eddie's parents are devoted full time to his recovery. His mother, Eileen, gave up her job as a nurse's aide. She is also attending school to become a licensed practical nurse, but



Eddie Halloran, Jr., and his beloved pal Cassie in November 2000 at his parents' home in Huntsville. Eddie's father said, "Him and that dog, just forget it. When he comes home, she goes crazy for him."

whether she will return to school in the fall remains up in the air.

Everyday life goes on, bills still have to be paid, tons of paperwork needs to be filed with workmen's compensation, but it's the last thing the Hallorans are thinking of right now.

Ed, Sr., is very thankful to the

people in the Back Mountain who have helped his family during this very trying time. He said he would like to thank Amy and Judy from A&J Landscaping, who have been watching the family's dog, Cassie, and helping his family. He'd also like to thank the paramedics at the pool and in the helicopter for doing such a good job. He'd also like to thank the lifeguard who pulled Eddie out. Ed, Sr., said

me in the basement and lock me away," his father said with a chuckle in his voice. But suddenly his serious tone returns. "Now we have to take care of him."

Eddie is a musician who loves to play the flute, tin pan and saxophone. "He's like every other kid," his father said, "he's on the computer all the time with his friends." He loves to roller blade. But most of all he loves to swim.

"He's 20 years old and I have never had a day's trouble with him," his father said, fondly. "He's a real good student. An all-around good kid."

His swim coach Nancy Edkins, shares the same sentiment. "He did all the right things. Bad things aren't supposed to happen to kids like him."

But she is hopeful for his recovery. "If Eddie makes the decision to get better, I believe he will do it," she believes.

Eddie's spirit and determination is what his father believes will lead him on his path to recovery. Eddie's family, friends and the community are what will help make the trip a little easier. "If anybody can come back from this, it will be him. He's a strong kid and his spirits are up," Ed, Sr., said.

"When he wants something he gets it. When he wanted to be the champion of the backstroke in New York, he knew he had to work extra hard. When he wants something, he goes for it," said the proud father.

If you would like to help Eddie Halloran and his family donations may be made to: Ed Halloran Accident Fund, PNC Bank, 325 Memorial Highway, Dallas, Pa. 18612.

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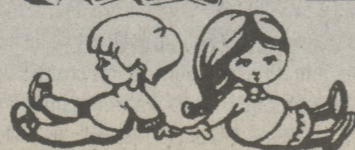
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