

**Testimony of Floyd Davidson Spence, Jr.**  
**Owner and Instructor of Lake Murray Fitness Cycle, LLC**  
**U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging**  
**September 8, 2021**

Good morning Ranking Member Scott and Distinguished Panel. I am honored to share with you how my life's journey has allowed me the opportunity to positively affect the lives of others through "Five to Stay Alive" Foundation Principles: Faith, Family, Friends, Freedom, and Fitness. They are values Momma and Daddy imparted to teach us the price that has been paid to protect our liberties, the importance of an active lifestyle, and appreciation to God for the beauty of His creation.

Beginning some 68 years ago, my life was active from the start. My Dad, Floyd Spence and Mom, Lu Spence moved to Lake Murray outside of Lexington, SC when I was about 3 years old. Dad helped build our home so learning about physical activity was just a natural part of growing up.

I started playing baseball and football as soon as I was old enough to play Little League/Dixie Youth Baseball and Youth Football. I was fortunate enough to enjoy some success and my Dad along with some great coaches, mentors and friends gave me some wonderful advice: If you want to excel in sports, you should train well and consistently, don't settle into just one sport and set yourself up for success by not drinking, not smoking and not doing drugs. To a kid of 8 to 10 years of age, I believed that advice was gold, and so for the remainder of my life, I have followed it.

God's plan has led me to Nautilus Sports Medical & Fitness, then St. Andrews Fitness, Gold's Gym, MUV Fitness, Lake Murray Fitness Cycle, Dynamic Health/Fitness and Crunch Fitness where I was responsible for instructing classes and training people of all ages, needs, and interests. My journey is filled with ordinary people who have done extraordinary and miraculous things because they made a commitment to themselves to live life active and well. My active life, my early decisions and even my injuries and challenges were all part of the Master's Plan not only for me but for my Dad.

My Dad developed COPD in his 50's and by 60 he was living with 5% total lung function on 24-hour oxygen in a wheelchair much of the time and given two months to live. When leaving the facility after receiving this news, a Doctor told Dad that there was an Experimental Double Lung Transplant Program at the

University of Mississippi Medical Center. Dad received an invitation but no promises especially given his age. During the 10 years of the progressive lung disease, Dad rode a Schwinn Airdyne bike to strengthen his heart, maintain as much lung function as possible and build body strength and endurance for the challenge ahead.

Dad arrived in Mississippi and *walked* into the hospital with his portable oxygen tank and cannula, smiling and thanking them for seeing him. They were shocked because this was not an old man in a wheelchair, on oxygen, near the end of his life. He passed all qualifications and was accepted into the program.

Six months later, not only did Dad survive the transplant and two subsequent rejection episodes, he rehabbed, recovered and returned to SC in September 1988 and was re-elected to his 10<sup>th</sup> term as the 2<sup>nd</sup> District Congressman from SC. Dad literally owed this miracle of new life to his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and to the love of a family who selflessly made their 19-year-old son's lungs available for transplant after he lost his life in a motorcycle accident. God bless them.

My Dad would face another challenge in 1999-2000 when his kidneys failed again. I was blessed to donate one of my kidneys to my Dad. I always thought the gift of organ donation could save or improve a life but to donate to my own Dad meant more than I could ever explain. I suddenly understood that in all of the years of staying faithful, training, staying fit, avoiding those things that weren't conducive to a healthy life, which I thought were to live well and to play well, I was actually being prepared to give my Dad the healthiest strongest kidney possible! Amazing! The transplant went flawlessly and Dad returned to Congress when they reconvened without missing a vote. I returned to work and playing baseball less than two weeks later.

Throughout Dad's life and mine we held close those "Five to Stay Alive" Foundation Principles. I placed the name on these principles because that's what they meant and still mean to me:

Faith, Family, Friends, Freedom and Fitness

Be Fit, Be Active, Be Well, Age Well. Thank you and God Bless.