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Ron Galbreath

200% Is Just What A Great “Coach” Gives!

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After a 36-season career coaching men’s basketball at Westminster College and Clarion University and, most recently, the women’s basketball team at Geneva College, Coach Ron Galbreath was about to face the most challenging opponent of his life.

As Galbreath settled in for the evening to watch Pitt basketball play in the Big East Conference semifinals on March 14, 2008, he started to feel nauseated. “I did not feel well that day,” Galbreath explains. “It felt like I was coming down with the flu.” His wife Pat knew something was wrong as her husband became increasingly weak. She drove him to Beaver Valley Medical Center where he was diagnosed with a stroke. Galbreath was then transferred to Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh where he spent several days in the Critical Care Unit. Once his medical status became stable, he was moved to the step-down unit, but experienced continued difficulty with vision, speech, and short-term memory. Galbreath’s right side was also paralyzed which he says was extremely frightening. “Initially, I was very afraid that I would not ever be able to move the right side of my body again,” he said.

Just one week following his stroke, Galbreath was transferred to the Stroke Program at HealthSouth Harmarville Rehabilitation Hospital. “Some of Ron’s doctors at the hospital thought he should be transferred to a nursing home instead of Harmarville,” Pat Galbreath said. “We just would not accept this for Ron and pushed for him to get into Harmarville. I wish they could see him now.”

Known as “Coach” by his Harmarville treatment team, Galbreath participated in several hours of



daily speech, occupational and physical therapy. At first, he was unable to stand or walk and he needed significant assistance to complete simple tasks like dressing and grooming. But he would not give in to his limitations.

“My therapists really pushed me, which is what I wanted,” Galbreath said. “I am very competitive and wanted to be challenged. I remember one day, my physical therapist wheeled me over to a flight of stairs and said ‘Coach, we are going up these stairs.’ I looked at him and told him he had to be kidding me. Well, within one week, I was not only using the stairs, I was walking outside and up hills.”

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