



Patty Barbato
Research Participant
Peter Barbato
Study Partner

For Patty Barbato and her husband, Peter, the decision to get involved with Alzheimer's research was an easy one. Patty's mother, Julia Noonan and her mother's identical twin, Agnes were both diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's. Another sister was diagnosed with late onset Alzheimer's disease.

The mother of ten children, Julia began showing signs in her 30's and passed away at just 54 years old. Eventually, Patty and her nine siblings learned that they each had a 50 percent chance of carrying the gene mutation for early onset. This knowledge sparked a determination in all of them to do whatever they could to stop the disease.

In the ensuing years, Patty and her large extended family would meet with neurologists, participate in DNA testing, testify before lawmakers, share their story with media and initiate an incredibly successful fundraising event to benefit research – Memory Ride (now known as Ride to End Alzheimer's).

Slowly, time revealed which of the Noonan siblings would have the disease. Patty was diagnosed with Alzheimer's at age 62. Two of her sisters and one brother were also eventually diagnosed.

Patty's diagnosis only strengthened her dedication to advancing Alzheimer's research. Today at 75, she continues to participate in studies. Patty and Peter also volunteer as Research Ambassadors and gladly share their story with anyone from personal friends to Harvard Medical students.

Peter says traveling from their home on the Cape to Brigham and Women's Hospital is not a problem. "You won't find any better people in the world than at Brigham and Women's Hospital, because they really care. They are truly like family and they want to help end this disease."

As for Patty, she maintains a positive attitude. "It is a very exciting time for us because research is going to break through. Research is going to stop, and eventually cure, Alzheimer's. There is hope. Don't give up."