



# I am an Inspiration.

We are his advocate.



**It was November 15, 1985**, a very foggy day, when Charles Ross Jr. (aka Bud) experienced a traumatic brain injury (TBI) while driving home from Jefferson College. He was 18 years old.

Due to the foggy conditions, Bud could not see a truck that was stopped up ahead on Route 61/67. At the last minute, he swerved to avoid the truck, only to hit a Cadillac, head on. Because he was not wearing a seatbelt, he was thrown into the passenger seat, immediately knocked unconscious and then slipped into a coma.

A bystander who had witnessed the accident pried open Bud's car door to find him passed out in the passenger seat. The bystander held Bud's head up until help arrived – which took longer than expected. The helicopter that was supposed to pick up Bud had to land in Illinois until the fog lifted. Once the helicopter arrived, it flew him to Saint Louis University Hospital. On January 1st, he was transferred to Mercy Hospital in Creve Coeur. He finally awoke from his coma on Jan 6th, 52 days later.

Bud spent a total of 317 days in the hospital and has since had about 30 surgeries to help with his walking, along with physical therapy and occupational therapy. Bud's mother played a large part in his physical therapy and helped get him walking again using a cane, and for a time without any support at all. He now uses a walker to stay mobile.

DD Advocates has helped Bud find housing at My Place Too, and supported his transition to Crystal Oaks, a skilled nursing facility equipped to provide the ongoing care he needed. Living at Crystal Oaks means he is also closer to his caring mother, who spent so much time helping Bud overcome the challenges he faced following his injury.

Bud is a very determined individual who regularly researches his Traumatic Brain Injury and the different medications that could potentially be useful to him. He then discusses those medications with his doctors to see if they think those meds could be suitable. Bud needs ongoing assistance with meds, as he says he "takes a bucket of medication" each day.

Despite his life-changing injury and long road to recovery, Bud is very self-sufficient. He is able to complete most personal care tasks, speaks clearly with others, reads and writes, and has completed two college Associates Degrees. Bud went on to spend 15 years as a computer drafting technician, but then had to go on disability because he could no longer afford his medication. He has spent time writing down his story with pinpoint accuracy and has considered turning his story into a short book, or even visiting area high schools where he could tell his story and educate teenagers on the importance of safe driving, wearing seatbelts, and what life is like with a Developmental Disability.