



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Walczyk

Senator Walczyk Wears Red and Blue Bow Tie for ALS Awareness

MARK WALCZYK May 9, 2023

| ISSUE: **BOW TIE TUESDAY, ALS, LOU GEHRIG'S DISEASE**



Senator Mark Walczyk is donning a red and blue tie to raise awareness for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. ALS, or Lou Gehrig's Disease as it's also commonly known as, is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord. According to the ALS Association, Motor neurons reach from the brain to the spinal cord and from the spinal cord to the muscles throughout the body. The progressive degeneration of the motor neurons in ALS eventually leads to their demise. When the motor neurons die, the ability of the brain to initiate and control muscle movement is lost. When voluntary muscle action is progressively affected, people may lose the ability to speak, eat, move and breathe.

The CDC explains that ALS has no cure and the cause of the disease is unknown. Furthermore, there aren't any real preventative measures you can take to stave off the disease. Anyone can be affected by ALS, but it's most commonly found in white males over the age of 60 years old. The latest statistics from the CDC

report there could be anywhere between 24,000 and 31,000 people living with this fatal disease in the United States. According to the ALS Association, red is the official color of ALS awareness.

Throughout the history of ALS being identified as a disease, it's awareness campaign received two major boosts in national recognition. The first, came on July 4, 1939, when iconic New York Yankees first baseman Lou Gehrig said farewell to the game he loved after being diagnosed with the disease. He stood at home plate and addressed fans in the ballpark and viewers across the world, saying "For the past two weeks you have been reading about a bad break. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth." The future hall of famer would die less than two years later. Today, the ALS association labels red as the color for ALS awareness, but many like to don the Yankees white and blue pinstripes as an awareness color scheme in recognition of "the Iron Horse".

Another huge boost in awareness came as many of us recall, in 2014 with the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge. This social media craze allowed individuals to nominate another individual, group, or organization to fill a bucket with ice cold water and pour it over your head. This campaign took off, enamoring individuals across the world and raising awareness for the disease. The results of the challenge speak for themselves. According to the ALS Association, the independent research organization was able to increase its research funding by over 187% due to the boost in recognition and donations.

q

"As May is ALS Awareness Month, I've tied my tie to the cause of raising awareness to this fatal disease. ALS has no cure and there are no known preventative measures that can be taken to avoid its diagnosis. Awareness and research are our only weapons in the fight against ALS. I'm proud to support this cause by wearing my red and blue tie in the capitol today and raising awareness to this terrible disease," said Senator Walczyk.

"The ALS Association Upstate New York Chapter is committed to making ALS livable until we can cure it," said Elizabeth Krisanda, Northeast Territory Executive of The ALS Association. "We are thrilled that the Senator is supporting Upstate New York families who are living with the daily challenges of ALS by raising awareness of the need for new treatments and cures, optimizing care, and preventing or delaying the harms of ALS."

Senator Walczyk represents the 49th Senate District of New York State which encompasses either the entirety or part of Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Oswego, Herkimer, Hamilton, and Fulton counties. Bow Tie Tuesday is a fun initiative by the Senator to raise awareness to important issues and will be released each Tuesday on his website and social media.