

## **SFU Press Releases Collection**

These archival copies have been generated from web press releases maintained and originally written by SFU Communications and Marketing. Where possible, an effort has been made to preserve the public comments left on the website as well as any included photos or other images. All textual content should be faithful to the original press releases; contact numbers have been removed but they have not otherwise been altered in any way. However, this collection of documents spans multiple generations of web authoring software and not all formatting will be exact.

## **Fox medallist rises above adversity**

Contact:

Dustin Paul, [Phone removed]; dep3@sfu.ca

Carol Thorbes, PAMR, [Phone removed]; cthorbes@sfu.ca

September 17, 2010

A Simon Fraser University student who overcame a motorcycle accident that left him a quadriplegic and earned top marks in criminology and a promising future in law has won SFU's annual Terry Fox Gold Medal.

Dustin Paul, who is paralyzed from the chest down with no motor function in his wrists and hands, will receive the award Sept. 23 before SFU's annual Terry Fox walk/run charity event. Teams will gather outside the theatre in Convocation Mall between 11:15-11:30 a.m.

The university awards the medal to SFU community members who demonstrate the qualities of courage and dedication to society exemplified by Fox, an SFU kinesiology student. During his 1980 cross-Canada Marathon of Hope for cancer research Fox raised millions of dollars. Fox was forced to stop his run due to a recurrence of his own fatal cancer 30 years ago this month.

Paul was an active 19-year-old engaged in many sports who was motorcycling to Whistler with friends in May 2004 when his bike malfunctioned mid-turn, causing him to lose control. The bike landed on his neck, crushing his spinal cord and changing his life forever.

'The first few years were definitely the hardest,' he recalls, 'trying to adapt to my new body, both physically and psychologically. I spent hours on floors after falling out of my wheelchair and cried until I could cry no more.'

Then in 2007, Paul decided 'I couldn't go on any longer feeling sorry for myself' and enrolled in the criminal justice program at Langara College before switching to SFU's School of Criminology in 2009.

'School became an outlet for me to express myself, to be comfortable with who I am and not who I was,' says Paul. The Vancouverite began speaking to college nursing students to enhance their understanding of people with disabilities.

Despite his circumstances, Paul maintained an almost perfect 4.0 grade point average. He is now in first-year law at the University of British Columbia, while completing a few remaining courses for his SFU criminology degree.

'In an odd way, that motorcycle accident has been somewhat of a blessing in disguise,' he says. 'Although I would prefer not to be in this situation, I'm a better person for it because I would've never accomplished all the things I have in life without it.'

-30-

Comments

Comment Guidelines

Fox medallist rises above adversity