

John VanderSloot

Okemos, MI



My name is John VanderSloot. I live in Okemos, MI; close to Michigan's state capitol of Lansing and Michigan State University.

When my high school buddy contacted me about the Edmund Fitzgerald Swim I thought, wow, what a neat way to commemorate the sailors lost 50 years ago! It started me thinking about my

own personal milestone 30 years ago and how much I've gotten to experience. 30 years since my bone marrow transplant for Leukemia. After radiation, chemo and a bone marrow transplant; 30 years have passed! 30 years to get married, have a child, get a job, watch a child get married, have a grandchild. 30 years to see the seasons change, the world change and to experience life. I have been blessed for sure.

I can't help thinking that the crew was a group of guys making their way, working hard and looking forward to their futures. Futures we all know they didn't get to experience. That is what motivates me to take on this challenge. I see my (our) swim as an honor to the memory of the lost crew of the Edmund Fitzgerald. I'll be thinking of these men and their families and what they might have done had they finished their Journey in November 1975 when I jump into Lake Huron this summer.

It's been 30 years since the first round of cancer and even longer since high school and college swimming, Ironman Triathlon and National Age Group Championship Triathlon days and getting back in the pool has been harder than I thought it would be, but I'm thankful I get to get in the pool and work toward the goal of completing the journey of the Edmund Fitzgerald and honoring the men who were her crew.