



December, 1998

Rick Middleton
206 Courtland St.
Elyria OH, OH 44035-3115

Dear Mr. Middleton:

Don Medaglia is unwavering in his praise for the work of Clinic physician Gary Hoffman, M.D. and his colleagues in the Clinic's Department of Rheumatic and Immunologic Diseases.

"I'm one of their miracles," he says with a smile.

A resident of Westlake, Ohio, Don noticed the first hint that something was not right in August of 1995. Perhaps the healthy and active 57-year-old was coming down with a late-summer cold or a sinus infection. "No big deal," he remembers thinking.

He had just finished a large masonry construction job, and he and Judi, his wife of 40 years, took a long-awaited vacation. But there was little rest and relaxation for Don. His joints and sinuses ached. His lower leg was covered with a rash. He suffered nose bleeds, coughed up blood, and battled a fever.

A series of tests revealed a rare disease: **Wegener's granulomatosis**. The disease afflicts only one in 30,000 people, but if not treated it can be deadly, often proving fatal within five months of diagnosis.

After eight months, Don was beating the odds. But the disease was taking its toll. By the time he came to the Cleveland Clinic in March of 1996, his kidneys had stopped functioning and he was placed on dialysis. That was when he met Dr. Hoffman.

Symptoms which had baffled other physicians looked familiar to Dr. Hoffman. **He is an expert on "orphan" diseases such as Wegener's granulomatosis.** Orphan diseases are so rare that most doctors have never seen or treated them, and the general public, by and large, has never heard of them.

The Chairman of the Clinic's Department of Rheumatic and Immunologic Diseases and a former investigator with the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Hoffman specializes in diseases that cause inflammation within blood vessels, called "vasculitis." This category includes Wegener's granulomatosis. He prescribed a series of drugs that are typically used to treat cancer but which have also been effective in treating non-cancerous diseases like Wegener's.

"Without treatment, Wegener's has an outlook worse than most cancers," says Dr. Hoffman. "However, with proper treatment, remission is usually achieved. Cure is possible in a minority of cases."

And that was the case for Don, who today exercises daily and sees his doctor every other month. His kidney function has been completely restored and he has been off dialysis for almost three years.

Judi Medaglia is grateful. *"Dr. Hoffman and the other wonderful doctors and nurses never gave up on him," she says. "They told him that there are always miracles."*

As I'm sure the Medaglias will agree, Dr. Hoffman represents what is best about the Cleveland Clinic, where the practical benefits of research show up in the world-class care we provide to our patients.

Your support of the Clinic can help us maintain this caliber of world-class patient care and biomedical research which is opening up new frontiers of knowledge – and, ultimately, saving lives. While our scientists are enthusiastic and dedicated about their healing mission, the happiest people are those who ultimately benefit from this research: our patients.

Thank you for your continued financial support and your commitment to the future of medicine. Your gift will ensure that excellent care remains available at the Cleveland Clinic for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Floyd D. Loop, M.D.
Chief Executive Officer and
Chairman, Board of Governors