



Jimmie Heuga
Legacy Foundation
For MS



Joan Nixon was an exceptional artist, mother of four, and a graduate of The Jimmie Heuga Center CAN DO program.

Joan was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) in her early 40s and was confined to a wheelchair for 50 years. By incorporating symptom management skills pioneered by Jimmie Heuga to support his own MS challenges, Joan was able to live alone at home, with support from occasional caregiver and family visits, until her death on October 30, 2024 at the age of 93.

After practicing wellness concepts learned at the CAN DO program and incorporating use of a scooter for mobility and a handicap van with hand controls for getting around, Joan continued a quality life of independence. Joan followed in the footsteps of Jimmie Heuga, inspiring others with her resilience, adaptation and positive attitude.

Joan committed to exercise regardless of her wheelchair-bound condition, shown in this picture (below) as Joan executes a hamstring stretch.



Jeannie Tatum, physical therapist who treated Joan, recalls meeting for the first time.

“Joan was unable to walk for years when I first met her. The program focused on ways Joan and others could better manage the symptoms of MS to live a quality life.”

Joan embraced what Jimmie promoted, including his philosophy of ‘making the best of the hand I was dealt’.

Joan's son, Jonathan, recalls when Joan declared, "I'm tired that every photo of me is in a wheelchair", as Joan balanced herself upright and stated, "Now I'm ready, go ahead and take it!" This picture exemplifies Joan's inspirational attitude for living life to the fullest, regardless of the hand you have been dealt.

Joan continued as an artist her entire life. This is an example (below) of Joan's artistry, completed after her diagnosis and while using a wrist brace on her left hand.

