



Gerri Taylor

Age 75, Alzheimer's Disease

New York, New York

“The accelerated approval pathway inspires the Alzheimer’s community with hope that there can be medical progress in the search for a cure... What more can you give somebody with an incurable disease than the opportunity to slow this down and make their life’s quality better.”

– Jim Taylor, Geri’s Husband & Caregiver

Gerri Taylor was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease in 2015 at the age of 71. A couple years prior, she had just retired after a successful 45-year career in health care and wasn’t feeling as sharp as before. She was not quite sure what to make of it until the morning she walked into the bathroom and didn’t recognize herself in the mirror. She hadn’t even shared any concerns with her husband Jim yet, but this very quickly led to a diagnosis of mild cognitive impairment (MCI) at age 69, and then Alzheimer’s disease two years later.

It took some time to come to terms with the uncertainty that lie ahead. Anxiety about the immense impact on Jim as her caregiver was a very close second to the initial blow of diagnosis. The Taylors took their time gathering information, acclimating to their new normal and pondering how to share the news with their family and friends.

It was in those early days post-diagnosis that they decided to raise their voices in support of others facing the same fate. Today, they are ardent advocates for medical research and access to existing therapies with the goal of shepherding advances, and someday even a cure, for this increasingly prevalent and devastating disease. Together they spearheaded efforts to develop MAP (Memory Advocates Program), a peer-to-peer effort to bring guidance to individuals newly diagnosed with dementia and their care partners. Gerri still serves on the board of MAP and has been actively involved in developing the program. In 2016, the Taylors shared their story in a [12-page New York Times story](#).

In 2015, Gerri became a participant in clinical trials for aducanumab, which was an experimental treatment at the time. Her cognitive decline appeared to slow, and the Taylors saw a noticeable shift when researchers took her off the drug as part of the trial process. Their experience propelled the Taylors to raise awareness around clinical trial access and diversification as well as stigma issues around Alzheimer’s disease.

As with any life-threatening, incurable disease, living with Alzheimer’s means facing new challenges every day. Continued progress on new treatments is critically important. The Taylors recognize that the FDA’s accelerated approval pathway provides opportunities to get treatments that are safe and effective to patients more quickly than the traditional approval pathway. In their view, no one should be denied the chance to receive such therapies.

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