



Rick Shalvoy

During the summer of 1997, Rick Shalvoy completed his first *Row for a Cure* after losing a friend to breast cancer in 1996. An annual fundraising event (1997-2006) that involved rowing 300 miles around the outer shoreline of Long Island, NY in a 19-foot ocean rescue boat, Rick completed the *Row for a Cure* alone each year with the exception of the East River segment. Nobel Laureate Dr. Harold Varmus, former Director of the National Institutes of Health, President of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Director of the National Cancer Institute, was Rick's rowing partner for the East River segment of the course from Wards Island to South Street Seaport in New York City.

In 1994, three years before the first *Row for a Cure* and shortly after his 21st summer working for New York State Parks as a part-time ocean lifeguard, Rick nearly lost his life when a ruptured appendix, emergency surgery and peritonitis suddenly taught him more than he ever wanted to learn about what it's like to be a patient in an intensive care unit.

During the long recovery process, Rick started to gain weight as his previously high level of physical activity was reduced to a primarily sedentary life. What began as a slow weight gain gradually increased over time and eventually triggered the "snowball effect" of obesity, i.e., insulin resistance, high blood sugar, low energy, unhealthy food cravings and more weight gain.

After gaining over 60 pounds and being unable to pass the lifeguard rehire test in 1995, Rick gained an additional 30 pounds before finally starting to lose weight and restore his health with the help of an obesity medicine physician and a regular schedule of indoor and outdoor exercise.

Upon returning to his ocean rescue job and competitive lifeboat rowing in 1996, Rick and his rowing partner, Bay Shore High School physical education teacher Bill Blackman, established the first high school crew team on the south shore of Long Island.

Rick started his professional career during the 1970s by utilizing his unique combination of education and skills – veterinary technology and journalism – writing articles of interest to dog breeders and pet owners while working as an animal health technician. Moving on from veterinary care to managing the sales team at Premium Veterinary Products in 1982, after seven years as a sales manager Rick made the transition from veterinary to human healthcare when he was recruited for the position of New York Territory Manager at SmithKline Diagnostics, a position from which he was promoted to Director of Patient Education Programs in 1992.

In 1995, while serving as the Medical Marketing Association's Northeast Chapter President and directing patient education programs for SmithKline Diagnostics, Rick and his colleagues at Astra Merck and Abbott Laboratories worked collaboratively on sponsorship and development of the *Digestive Health Initiative*, a national consumer health education campaign conducted by the American Gastroenterological Association.

As Founder and President of Consumer Health Education Programs and a member of the Obesity Medicine Association, Rick is devoted to healthcare consumer advocacy with a special focus on educating consumers about convenient and affordable weight management programs that allow patients to take charge of their health from home under the guidance of healthcare professionals who provide telehealth consultations, laboratory testing orders, medication prescriptions (if/when appropriate) and exercise and nutrition counseling to serve and monitor the progress of their patients.



Rowing in the Atlantic Ocean (June 2006)



Dr. Harold Varmus and Rick at South Street Seaport (July 2004)



Rowing in the East River toward Lower Manhattan
July 10, 2001 – *Newsday* photo by Dan Goodrich

For all of his efforts in the fight against breast cancer, Rick was honored by the American Cancer Society, Estée Lauder Breast Cancer Research Foundation, Carol M. Baldwin Breast Cancer Research Fund, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York City Council, New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, New York State Assembly, New York State Senate, New York State Governor George Pataki, United States House of Representatives, United States Senate, and The White House.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 15, 2000

Mr. Rick Shalvoy
151 Dogwood Avenue
Malverne, New York 11565-1202

Dear Rick:

Thank you for the *Row for A Cure* tee shirt. It is a wonderful reminder of my recent visit to SUNY College of Old Westbury and of your efforts in the fight against Breast Cancer.

With appreciation for your thoughtfulness, I am

Sincerely yours,



Hillary Rodham Clinton

