

## HEART HERO 2019: ANTHONY KING

Stroke survivor living with Atrial Fibrillation, former Mental Health Therapist

*Nominated by World Stroke Organization*

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*“I’m motivated to counsel people on paying attention to their heart and any signs that there may be trouble.”*

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I was in what I thought was very good health, prior to my having a Wallenberg Syndrome stroke on November 1st of last year. I had no idea I had Atrial Fibrillation (AF) until I experienced the stroke. I’m now on medication to manage the AF, and I take my vital signs religiously twice daily. As to the Wallenberg Syndrome, my health is still improving. I work on improving my balance and coordination by seeing a physical therapist and working on making daily, weekly, monthly improvements. It is a slow process, but I’m getting better and better. I have kept a positive attitude and this helps a lot as well as the support of my loving and helpful wife and family. I had to learn to swallow again. I was on a feeding tube for about five months. Boy, do I enjoy the taste of food! I will never take eating for granted again.

Before my stroke, I was an avid golfer. I played squash, skied and was a distance runner. Now I walk and I work out at home with some difficulty. I have no need for a walker or a wheelchair and that is a big improvement. Is there anything I would have done differently before my stroke? No. I was doing everything right. I was just unaware that I had AF. I don’t smoke or drink alcohol. I’m not overweight. I exercised regularly. I wish someone would have detected the AF earlier. Now, I’m motivated to counsel people on paying attention to their heart and any signs that there may be trouble.

I’m a good listener. When I have an opportunity, I try to let others know what I have experienced and help them to avoid having health issues that can possibly be avoided. I’m so grateful for all the love and support I receive from my inner circle. I’m blessed to have great friends who call me regularly. We laugh together and that is healing. It’s nice when you know you have people who really care about you.