

ADVOCATES

First, we listen ...

"Each of Us Is a Person First"

By Scott Stephens, 1st Prize Winner

Each of Us Is a Person First, I believe means we all have certain needs, because we are all thinking and breathing no matter of our needs, mental and/or physical. First, I try not to treat anyone in the way in which I want anyone to treat me.

I say this because after I received my T.B.I. I went back to school to finish my High School education. Because of my injury I could neither walk nor talk, so when I went I was there I could not understand why I was treated like I was "a moron" or so I thought. I do not like being labeled, because I am not like anyone else.

I believe "Each of Us Is a Person" because we are allowed to think the way they do. I have gone through many hardships after I received my injury. So, let's start from the beginning.

Back on the night of Saturday, May 21, 1983, I was involved in a serious Motor vehicle accident. When the car which I was driving went and hit a tree. This was an unexplainable accident because I was not doing drugs nor was I drunk! Now, this accident left me comatose for over 9 months, and I stayed at the Lewis Bay Head Injury Faculty down in Hyannis Mass. For over 2 years.

I then spent over the next 2 years doing intense rehabilitation. Then, I went to school for 4 years. There I learned how to use a computer. Then, I formed a stationery company named Stationery Designs, Inc. This company mainly does the printing up of personalized stationery and invitations.

Through my experiences, I have learned how to apply myself in doing what ever I strive to do. It does not matter what happens to you. We should not be labeled, but we should be treated with respect not as a person who is "stupid".

It is very annoying when people, like my doctors won't talk directly to me but talk to the person I am with. Or anyone out in public, when they look at me they will see me and what I can't do, by appearance, they will talk with the person I am with.

Since my injury, I've had to work with a lot of people in the health care, education and business fields, and I really appreciate their support regardless of the fact that majority of my health care providers are from different ethnic backgrounds.

I listen to everyone then I pass judgment on what they are saying. I do not judge them by what they look like or how they get their point across.

This is the way I feel all people should be treated, regardless of their mental or ethnic backgrounds.