

[back to article](#)



Mario Medero, clinic founder, dies at 56

By NASEEM S. MILLER
Star-Banner

Published: Friday, August 1, 2008 at 6:30 a.m.

OCALA - Dr. Mario Medero, an Ocala physician and founder of Medero Medical clinics, died last Friday at his home in Ocala. He was 56.

He died of ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, said his wife of 13 years, Laura.

Medero was diagnosed with the disease nine years ago and lived longer than the two- to five-year life expectancy.

"He was very brave and he fought [ALS]," Laura Medero said. "He had a lot of hope that they'll come up with a cure in his time. He tried not to let [ALS] stop him and tried to acquire all the medical equipment that helped him stay active."

Medero was the son of a teacher and a plumber and was the first in his family to go to medical school.

He completed his medical degree at the University of South Florida in Tampa. He finished his internship and residency in general surgery at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

In the mid-1980s he founded Medero Medical, an occupational medicine facility for injured workers, and grew it to six clinics in Central Florida.

"He was an extremely dedicated and intelligent physician," said Cookie Dominie, director of operations for the company, who has worked with Medero for 21 years. Dominie said Medero was a visionary businessman and a caring person.

"He wanted to make sure workers were taken care of. He cared about the blue-collar workers," she said.

Medero also loved the Florida outdoors and activities.

His favorite hobby was deep-sea fishing. In 2001, after his diagnosis, he went to Cuba for a fishing tournament.

Medero enjoyed getting on his tractor and working around the family farm in Orange Lake, said his wife. The family eventually sold its farm because of Medero's disease. He also loved working on his boat in the Keys.

Medero was active in his clinic for several years after being diagnosed with ALS. He had an electric wheelchair at each of his clinics so he could get around and see patients.

But the progression of the disease finally stopped him.

ALS is a neurodegenerative disease that usually attacks both upper and lower motor neurons and causes degeneration throughout the brain and spinal cord, according to the ALS Association. There are limited options for treatment and there's no cure.

Medero stopped going to the clinics two years ago and it bothered him that he couldn't go, said his wife. "He used his hands and needed his hands and that was one of the first muscle groups that were affected," she said.

Medero enjoyed spending time with his family and three children, Hunter Rose, 11, Taylor Wade, 10, and David Marcus, 7. He was happy to experience being a father again, his wife said. Medero has two children from a previous marriage, Mario Antonio, 30, and Megan Kristine, 23.

Medero's death was not sudden, because of the gradual progression of the disease. ALS eventually affects the lungs, and the patients stop breathing.

Although he's gone, he has left those around him with valuable life lessons.

"One of his favorite things to say to me was, 'everyday is a school day,' " Laura Medero said. "That's something I'll carry with me."

"He loved life. He hated sleep and would say it's a waste of time. He lived a lot more than a lot of people. And he's in heaven now, walking around with a big smile," she said.

Naseem Miller may be reached at naseem.miller@starbanner.com or 867-4140.