



**RACING TO END ALZHEIMER'S**



The no. 43MDK motorsports, Racing to End Alzheimer's Porsche races at Sebring international raceway last year.

# Racing to End Alzheimer's

## 'Fund the care, find the cure'

By **ALLEN MOODY**  
Correspondent

PHIL FRENGS WILL BE THE FIRST to tell you he's a bit of a racing geek. His company, Legistics, has been a longtime sponsor of race cars and he was a regular at the race track for quite some time.

But that all changed in November 2013 when his wife, Mimi, was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's. He stayed home for several years to act as Mimi's primary caregiver, before hiring full-time caregivers.

"Once I got back to the track, which was in 2016, it dawned on me that this was a great opportunity," Frengs said. "Rather than cover the car with our logo, how much better would it be if we could put the names of people who have been affected by this disease, both those living and those who may have passed on, as a tribute to them and a way of honoring or remembering them? And so we decided to do it in 2017 and it's been growing."

Frengs created the Racing to End Alzheimer's Foundation, both as a way to pay tribute to Mimi, but also as a way to raise Alzheimer's funds and to raise awareness of the disease.

The fundraising aspect comes in the form of donations, which are matched by Freng's com-

pany. For \$250, people can have the name of a loved one put on the team's No. 43 MDK Motorsports Racing to End Alzheimer's Porsche, which will be competing this week in the Porsche Carrera Cup North America series. But all donation amounts are welcomed.

"It was a modest effort in 2017 and has grown to a point where last year, 216 names was the final count on the car," Frengs said. "With other donations that came in, we were able to raise \$250,000 last race season. That now puts us over the million dollar mark since we started in 2017."

Frengs said letting people know about the foundation and what they do is basically a time-consuming task. They use social media,

such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as keep the website (r2endalz.org) updated consistently.

YOU'LL OFTEN FIND FRENGS in the paddock area during the races talking to people about Alzheimer's and the Racing to End Alzheimer's Foundation.

"Oftentimes people are interested in what we're doing and they're asking questions, then all of a sudden I can see it in their eyes," he said. "Their eyes might get a little glassy and all of the sudden the reveal comes and they'll say, 'Well, I have somebody, it's my grandmother' or, 'I have a brother who is suffering from dementia.' It gets very personal very quickly in these conversations, and I find it's really hard to find anybody who doesn't have some impact on their lives, somebody they love who is going through this journey."

The money raised by the foundation goes to two primary beneficiaries, the UCLA Alzheimer's and Dementia Care Program, whose mission is to help families with social and psychological support, and the Nantz National Alzheimer's Center at Houston Methodist, named for CBS sportscaster Jim Nantz, whose father suffered from Alzheimer's. After his father died, Nantz helped found the the Center. UCLA basically deals with the care aspect, while the Nantz Center works on the cure.

"They're doing great things. A lot of trials that we hear about, these new drugs that are coming out, are being conducted at Houston Methodist at the Nantz National Alzheimer's Center, among other places," Frengs said. "Their medical director, Dr. (Joseph) Masdeu, has become quite a friend of mine."

"He basically says, 'Look, here's where we are in this world. We can start blood testing and do other types of tests to identify people who may have Alzheimer's in their future. If we know that, we can track those people and when they start showing signs of cognitive decline we can put them on these world class medicines and we can delay the impact on their lives for two, three, maybe four years. They can continue to be functional before the disease really gets to them.'"

