

INSPIRING HOPE

Phil Bowen - "I feel great, work full time and still do everything I want to do".

At 20 years old I became very ill. It started with headaches and night sweats and was followed by fever and severe joint pain. My weight dropped from 160 to 135 in less than a month and my temperature would at times spike at around 104. I went to the emergency room and spent the next two months in the hospital being treated for bacterial endocarditis. I was released after the infection was wiped out, but not before it did considerable **damage to my aortic heart valve.**



Over the next 5 years, my valve continued to deteriorate until it was replaced with a pig valve. Tissue valves wear out over time and this one lasted 6 years.

At the age of 31, I had my second open heart surgery to replace the pig valve with a Bjork Shiley mechanical valve. You can imagine my surprise when watching an episode of 60 Minutes; I learned that my new valve was taken off the market due to excessive failures.

Four years later I found myself back in the hospital again with **endocarditis**. This infection left a leak around my aortic valve as well a perforated atrial septum. Due to the amount of scar tissue around my valve from the 2 prior surgeries, it was decided to wait as long as possible before going back in.

In March of 1992 my aortic valve was replaced with a *St. Jude* mechanical valve and my septum was repaired. I left the hospital thrilled to be rid of the defective *Bjork Shiley* valve and anxious to start my recovery.

By July I had most of my strength back, but I had reached a plateau. In August, my health was going downhill and I was losing ground. My doctor couldn't understand why the valve started leaking again and thought maybe it did not seat well due to the scar tissue. He had to go back in to replace my new valve after 7 short months.

Once he opened me up he discovered the problem, I had bacterial endocarditis again. He loaded me with heavy antibiotics and replaced my valve with a human valve. This valve lasted me a full 15 years until it wore out. In 2007 I had my **fifth aortic valve replacement**, this time a *CarboMedic* valve.

Today at 57 I **feel great, work full time and still do everything I want to do.**

If you've had a similar experience, or would just like to talk to Phil about living with heart disease, his contact information is listed below!

Mended Hearts of Central Ohio

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It is great to be alive – and to help others