



Riding for Rene Smith - husband, best friend and best biking partner ever.



Riding for this man: father,
husband and best friend -
Rene Smith - and all the bike
rides we shared together.

Julie Coghlan Smith

100%
of Goal

\$6,565
Raised

Riding for Rene Smith
1954 – 2011

"The Ride to Conquer Cancer benefiting the BC Cancer Foundation is a transformational cycling journey, spanning over two days and 200 kilometres. In August 2018, I'll be taking on the scenic Pacific Northwest in solidarity and promise to show that cancer is no match against our conviction to conquer it."

The truth is, I am riding because my friend, Andrew Crompton, twisted my arm to participate. He is a veteran at this ride and every year he cycles for his beautiful, smart and wickedly funny wife, Vicky, who I am honoured to have as a good friend and who has survived breast cancer. Andrew always remembers to mention Rene as one of the people who inspires him to ride and fundraise.

I will do this ride only once, as I am not very good at asking people for money, and don't want to have to do so again. However, I have always wanted to do this ride, especially the overnight camp in-between, which sounds like a blast – so this is the year.

This year, I am one year older than Rene was when he died. I often think how it must have been for him, knowing that he was dying. He was stoic and sanguine in his last two years of life, but deep inside he must have been afraid. Not only for himself, for the crossing over into the great unknown, being left untethered to face the great mystery of death, but also for the beautiful, 16-year-old boy he was leaving behind, our son Oliver. How he must have wanted to grasp at Oliver's life and hold it securely in his strong hands, to shape and protect, to support and to love.

I admire Rene. I admire the courage it took him to wake up each day, and get out of bed and keep working, keep laughing and keep on living. I wonder if I could be so brave and gracious in the face of my mortality.

When Rene died, I was left terrified of life without him. Terrified of being alone, of paying the mortgage, going on holidays, walking into parties, buying cars, waking up and falling asleep, alone. Friday nights opened up before me like big, yowling black holes. I yearned to be able to drive home from work, at the end of a long week, and have a glass of wine and a comforting meal with my husband and best friend of **the past twenty years**.

Going home to a quiet house was achingly empty. There were many days and nights that the silence of my new life was almost unbearable. Rene's last gift to me was his death. It has taken the best of six years plus, and I have finally discovered the joy of my being and the tranquillity of solitude.

And so, when I get on my bike in August and pedal the 200 kilometres, I will do so in gratitude for all that Rene gave me, in his life and death. And I will celebrate his memory, every grinding hill, pedal for pedal. In my mind, I will see him peddling ahead of me with his stocky, hairy calves, wearing his yellow cycling shirt that I still have hanging in my cupboard to remind me of all our adventures together.

Join me in celebrating Rene by partnering with me. You can do this by donating, by offering me moral support, by joining me on some long, delicious bike rides as I train for the big ride! And perhaps in the future, there will be an answer to melanoma, and brave souls like Rene can live to grow old with their wives and see their boys grow into men.

"Funds raised through The Ride for the BC Cancer Foundation will support cancer research, treatment, and services at the BC Cancer Agency, a leader in cancer research and treatment."

I've already got my bike and helmet, but to guarantee my Ride success, I need your donation...