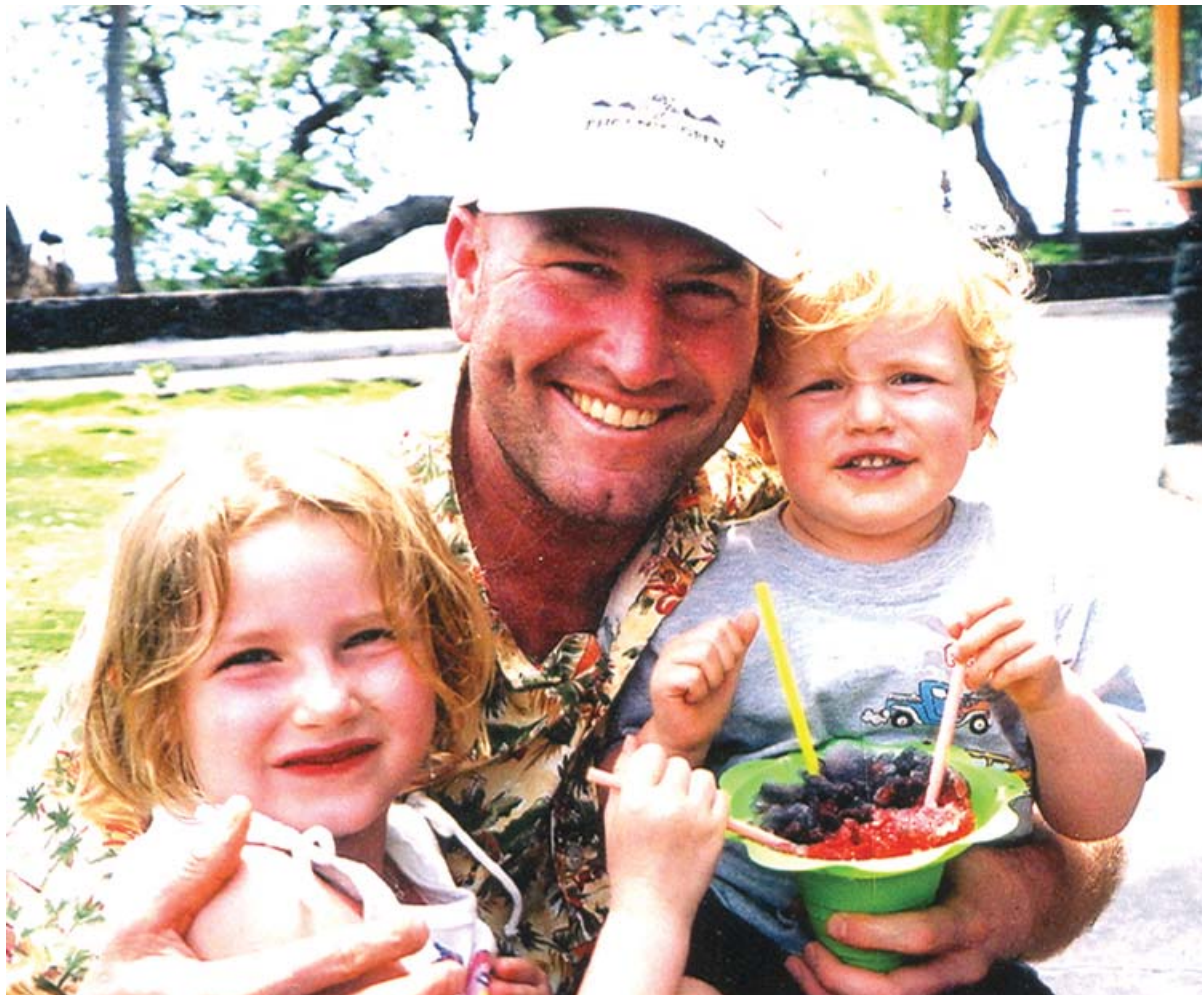


**Fundraising for the Steven M. Gootter Endowed Chair
for the Prevention and Treatment of Sudden Cardiac Death
College of Medicine
Sarver Heart Center**



UA Grad's Life Cut Short

by John Brown

Steven M. Gootter '85 could have been on the cover of *Men's Health* magazine. A state tennis champion in high school, the 42-year-old father led the quintessential healthy lifestyle. He didn't smoke, exercised regularly, and had no history of heart problems.

So there was no way of knowing when he left his house for a morning run on February 10, 2005, it would be the last time his wife, Debbie, their two children, and the rest of his family and friends would see him. Sudden cardiac death claimed his life.

Gootter was a successful businessman and entrepreneur. Friends describe him as a people-magnet, blessed with the gift of making everyone he met feel special.

"He had many best friends, and I say that very genuinely.

You always felt good in his presence," says his sister, Claudine Messing. "That is the tragedy of his death — to lose someone who was so alive and had such passion for life, to have died so young."

Gootter's untimely death left family and friends with relatively few answers. Being paralyzed by grief was not an option.

"We all got motivated to make something positive out of our tragic experience," Messing says.

His parents, Joe and Paulette Gootter, along with other friends and family members, mobilized to establish the Steven M. Gootter Foundation in 2005 to support scientific research in sudden cardiac death and education and awareness of the condition.

The foundation funds promising research at the UA Sarver

Heart Center (see sidebar), and has raised nearly \$800,000 of its \$2-million endowment goal for the Steven M. Gootter Chair for the Prevention and Treatment of Sudden Cardiac Death.

“He inspired us all to create something special that could promote greater awareness and research, and someday, hopefully, spare other families such tragedies,” says brother-in-law Andrew Messing, vice president of the foundation’s board of directors.

For three years, the Gootter Foundation’s signature event has been the Gootter Grand Slam Tennis Tournament and Gala Dinner in Tucson.

In March 2008, UA football coach Mike Stoops and other celebrities joined former tennis pros Mats Wilander and Aaron Krickstein in hosting the 90-player tournament at Randolph Tennis Center.

The family event features health and wellness centers, massages, and a jumping castle. In just three years, it has become the largest event of its kind in Tucson, raising nearly \$800,000.

“The event’s success is a testament to the type of person Steve was. He was an extraordinary guy who touched so many lives — nearly 1,600 people attended his memorial services,” says Andrew Messing.

The foundation that ensures Steve’s spirit lives on is entirely run by volunteer staff, mainly friends and family members.

“It’s been a lot of work and a lot of fun ... we’ve been successful beyond our dreams,” says Bobby Present, a former tennis buddy who has served as the foundation’s president since its inception.

“Every dollar that we raise goes directly to research,” adds Claudine Messing. “The work is making a difference right now. It is very gratifying.”

The foundation’s primary focus is its \$2-million endowment campaign to support the Gootter Endowed Chair. The chair will enable the UA to recruit a faculty member with the scientific and clinical expertise to work toward finding new and improved ways of preventing sudden cardiac death.

“An endowed chair has the single most direct impact in academics, which is very important to us,” Claudine Messing says.

“Every dollar that we raise goes directly to research. The work is making a difference right now. It is very gratifying.”

— Claudine Messing,
Steven Gootter’s sister



UA Football Coach Mike Stoops at the Gootter Grand Slam Tennis Tournament with tennis pro Mats Wilander.

MRIs show promise in predicting sudden cardiac death

As the term suggests, sudden cardiac death, also called sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), occurs when the heart stops working, abruptly and without warning. More than half of U.S. heart-related deaths are attributed to SCA.

SCA claims 335,000 lives each year, more than deaths from lung cancer, breast cancer, and AIDS combined.

There are few warning signs or symptoms to identify people at risk. Sudden cardiac arrest typically strikes adults in their mid-30s to mid-40s, and less often, teenagers and senior citizens.

If administered within the first minutes, CPR and the use of a defibrillator can often revive a person from sudden cardiac arrest.

The Steven M. Gootter Foundation Investigator Award has funded four studies on SCA at the Sarver Heart Center, including the promising work of Vincent L. Sorrell, M.D., who holds the Allan C. Hudson and Helen Lovaas Chair of Cardiovascular Imaging.

Sorrell’s early research suggests that magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the heart can be used to predict sudden cardiac death.

“I firmly believe that sudden cardiac death can be prevented,” Sorrell says.

For more information:

Steven M. Gootter Foundation

520-615-6430 stevenmgootterfoundation.org

UA Sarver Heart Center

Clint McCall, Director of Development

520-621-4146