

DEREK DOLENC

Derek Dolenc was born in Jacksonville, Illinois in 1960 and lived in Auburn, Illinois throughout his childhood. In 1978, he graduated from Auburn High School with scholastic and sports honors. Derek received a golf scholarship to Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville where he graduated with scholastic and golf honors in 1982. After graduation, Derek worked as a salesman in Houston, Texas for a local Springfield company, Metal Décor.

In 1987, Derek had an abnormal mole removed from this left shoulder. The mole proved to be cancerous but the doctors thought they had removed it all.

In 1988, he moved back to Springfield as he was promoted to National Sales Manager of Metal Décor's corporate headquarters.

In April of 1990, Derek discovered a lump under his arm that proved to be metastatic malignant melanoma. The tumor was removed, but physicians could not get all the cancer.

In July of 1990, Derek traveled to Los Angeles for three months of experimental treatment because standard treatment would have been ineffective. During his three months stay in Los Angeles, a tumor was discovered in his liver.

The following September, Derek returned to Springfield to finish treatment at Memorial's Regional Cancer Center. He had the tumor in his liver removed in December. Just as it seemed Derek had cleared one hurdle, another one took its place. By February of 1991, the cancer has spread to his lungs.

In April of 1991, the National Cancer Institute in Frederick, Maryland, which only accepts the most extreme cases, accepted Derek. There, he underwent experimental treatments for several months that proved to be unsuccessful.

In September of 1991, Derek had a seizure and it was discovered that the cancer had spread to his brain.

Derek fought a tremendous battle for nearly two years, but on November 9, 1991, he died, at the age of 31. Derek left behind his wife and one-year-old daughter whom he fought so hard to live for.

During the last days of Derek's life, he expressed how he would like to thank the community for all its support and help while he was fighting his battle with cancer. Shortly after his death, a golf tournament was established in his name to carry out his wishes.