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Former Basketball Star Alonzo Jamison Teams Up with Wife Colleen Jamison in Support of Organ, Eye and Tissue Donation

WESTWOOD, Kan. (June 22, 2020) — Initially hesitant to talk about his need for a kidney transplant, [Green Ribbon Champion](#) Alonzo Jamison has found his voice. He now formally advocates for people to become registered organ, eye and tissue donors, years after undergoing dialysis and, later, receiving a kidney transplant from a living donor.

For the second year of his [Green Ribbon Campaign](#), former University of Kansas power forward Jamison is partnering with a fellow donation advocate: his wife, Colleen Jamison. An attorney, Colleen spends much of her free time volunteering for the [National Kidney Foundation](#) and testifying for pro-donation legislation.

“I think education is really important, and I want to do whatever I can to get the word out,” Colleen said.

While Alonzo waited for a lifesaving kidney transplant, he underwent almost two years of nightly dialysis treatments.

“Physically, it was a chore,” Colleen said. “I wasn’t in his head, so I can’t even imagine how it must have been for him mentally.”

After keeping his diagnosis largely under wraps, Alonzo eventually decided to share with others his need of a kidney transplant.

“I had always encouraged Alonzo to be public with it, and he was reluctant,” Colleen said. “Then something happened to change that: A young man who Alonzo used to coach in basketball was public on social media about his medical issues. And Alonzo and I talked about it and decided that, if this young man is brave enough to go public, then maybe it’s time that Alonzo do the same.”

Alonzo and Colleen published a call for help on social media, and news stations that previously had covered Alonzo as a basketball player contacted him to find out more and help spread the word. Eventually, one of Colleen’s business acquaintances, Wichita native and Army veteran Shekinah Bailey, asked how he could be tested to potentially donate a kidney to Alonzo. Bailey was a match, and he soon donated one of his kidneys to Alonzo.

“After his transplant, Alonzo looked so much healthier — which he was, because he had a kidney that was functioning properly,” Colleen said.

Alonzo added: “Shekinah didn’t know me, and he had no obligation to help me, but that’s the kind of person he is. When it came down to saving my life, he stepped up to the plate. Through organ donation, people from all walks of life can provide these amazing gifts for each other.”

Alonzo and Bailey now are a team, bonded for life through this unique and humbling experience. Alonzo also speaks to the importance of his other MVP off the court.

“My wife, thankfully, is doing a lot to raise awareness for donation,” Alonzo said. “She was there for me when I went through my dialysis and things of that nature. I am so grateful that she was there for me.”

Everyone can be a registered organ donor — regardless of age or medical history — and the registration process is quick and easy. Individuals can sign up at [ShareLifeMidwest.com](https://www.sharelifemidwest.com) or at the DMV when obtaining or renewing a driver’s license or ID card. More information about how to help support organ donation is available at [mwtn.org/get-involved](https://www.mwtn.org/get-involved).

About Midwest Transplant Network

Midwest Transplant Network has been connecting lives through organ donation since 1973. As the federally designated not-for-profit organ procurement organization (OPO) for Kansas and the western two-thirds of Missouri, Midwest Transplant Network provides services including organ procurement; surgical tissue and eye recovery; laboratory testing; and 24-hour rapid response for referrals from hospital partners. Midwest Transplant Network ranks in the top 10% in the country among OPOs, which reflects the organization’s quality, professionalism and excellence in partnerships throughout the region. For more information, visit [mwtn.org](https://www.mwtn.org).

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