



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Phoebe Inpatient Rehab Hosts Wedding for Patient

Albany, Ga. – Michael and Marsha Robinson have been together for 28 years. They have seven children – Michael had four before they met, and they have three children together – plus five grandchildren with two more on the way. Michael runs his own mechanic shop, Albany Used Auto Parts. The life the large family enjoyed together changed forever on November 27, 2023.

“Michael pulled up to our shop after going to lunch. One of our boys needed money to buy some car parts, so he walked out to the truck, and when he asked about it, Michael’s head went back into the head rest,” Marsha said. “His son thought he was just playing around, but then he realized what was going on and called 911.”

Michael suffered a major and debilitating stroke and was hospitalized for nearly six weeks before being transferred to Phoebe Inpatient Rehab at Phoebe North. “When Mr. Michael first got here, he couldn’t even sit up by himself. He couldn’t help with his dressing or any of his self-care,” said Shenika Jackson, Phoebe Inpatient Rehab Occupational Therapist.

Michael still can’t use his right arm, and he suffers from aphasia, a language disorder most often caused by strokes. It does not affect intelligence, but it does affect speech, making it difficult for a patient to communicate. Still, Michael has made great progress.

“He was totally dependent. Now, he does 50% of the work during our therapy sessions, and I do 50% of the work, and there are some tasks he can do himself. That’s a significant improvement,” Jackson said. “He’s come a long way, and I just love him.”

Through Michael’s long and difficult rehab, Marsha has been by his side every day. Even though they’ve been almost inseparable for nearly 30 years, they had never officially gotten married.

“We’ve talked several times about getting married, but we just never planned anything out,” Marsha said. Michael was determined to change that.

“I was in the room one day, and he was doing a bunch of hand gestures,” Marsha said. “I said, ‘are you trying to tell me you love me?’ He said, ‘yeah.’ And I said, ‘I love you, too, with all my heart.’”

Michael continued to gesture, making it clear he had something important he needed to communicate. Finally, Marsha asked if he was trying to tell her he wanted to get married, and he indicated he was. The Robinsons approached Phoebe Inpatient Rehab Social Services Coordinator Debra Pinson to ask for help. “They came to us to see if we could facilitate helping them get married right away, and everybody just jumped right in,” Pinson said.

After making inquiries with Dougherty County Probate Court, the rehab team loaded Michael into a transport van and took him to the courthouse, so the couple could get a marriage license. They also planned the wedding, made decorations, prepared refreshments and hosted the ceremony in the rehab recreation room at Phoebe North.

“It meant everything to me. It really touched my heart. They’re a very awesome team, and we’re very thankful,” Marsha said.

Michael was able to stand up as Marsha walked down the aisle. While he may not have been able to verbalize his thoughts, the tears streaming down his face expressed his feelings as clearly as any words could.

“We’ve done special things for patients before, but nothing quite like this,” said Kristin Culpepper, Phoebe Inpatient Rehab Manager. “This is the reason we do what we do every day – to get people back to their lives. This team works so hard, and they put everything they have into these patients. It’s about their quality of life, and what better quality is there than this?”

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