

Mike Esmonde, a Dr. Phillips resident and Universal Studios technical manager, raises more than \$500,

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ike Esmonde has been raising money for the National Mu

An avid cycling enthusiast, Mike admits he began fundraising on a "social lark" after seeing an advertise

One Mile at a Time

"At first I had no idea what MS was," he said. "In the early years, I joined the event to meet people. Ther "For me it is almost like part of my life. That's how far the event has come for me. It's part of the rhythm The recipient of the Bike MS Top Fundraiser Award for 10 of the past 11 years, Mike usually averages n Each year, Mike contacts a list of 275 people, composed of about 10 percent family members and 90 pe "I've known Mike for 30 plus years, and he has brought to bike fundraising the same skills, dedication ar Working as a lighting designer and later as a production stage manager, Mike spent 15 years in the mus While on tour with Jethro Tull in 1977, Mike purchased his first bike and took up his now favorite pastime "A friend and I bought two bikes at a London open market," he said. "We had the day off, and it was a gr Mike enjoyed it so much, he kept it up, and began to look forward to his days off in each new city. "It's really a great way to see a city and sightsee; it's the best way to see the world," he said. Mike continues to ride an average of five to six miles each day. He commutes daily to and from Universal

"I ride anywhere," he said. "Rain or shine, I'll put my raincoat on and head to work. In the morning, it's gr Mike and his late wife, Lisa, who he met in fourth grade and was married to for 36 years, shared their lovership and the share of the s "Bikes are definitely a family thing," he said. "It's a common thread that runs through the family." In addition to his dedication to the MS Society, Mike also volunteers with the theater program at Camp E When it comes to raising money, Mike admits that he is successful because of his creative style of funda "There is an art to it," Mike said. "And each and every year, as I receive the letters back, it's like Christm "[His] approach to fundraising is fun, light-hearted and honest," said Mike's youngest daughter, Megan N "When people meet him, they can immediately sense the genuineness in him," said Michele Coleman, h More than 1,500 cyclists of all skill levels participated in Bike MS: The Citrus Tour 2011 and raised more

"It's a lot of fun," Mike said. "People of all skill levels participate. It's about the comradeship, as well as d

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