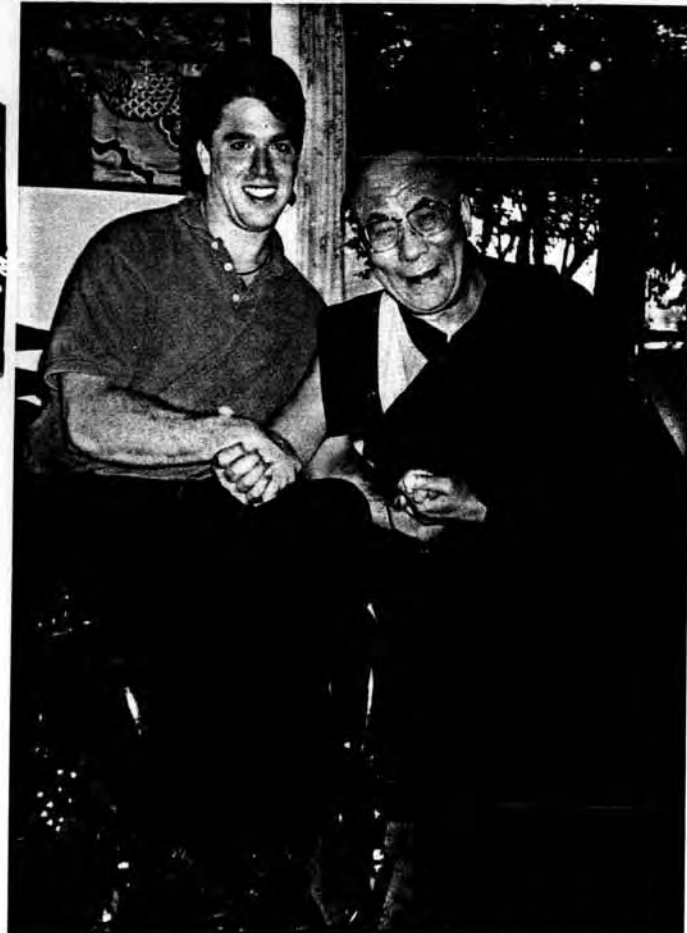


Seton Hall

Spring 2000
University of



During the "Devotion to Motion" world tour of Scott F. Chesney '92, a private audience with Tibet's Dalai Lama in September 1999 proved unforgettable.

A Spiritual Journey Around the World

Driven to know God better, determined to banish intolerance and injustice, and dedicated to finding "our true spirit, which is full of fire and endless creativity," Scott F. Chesney '92 has wings on his wheels. Although for almost half of his 30 years he has been paralyzed, he has twice ventured around the world.

Chesney undertook his first globetrotting expedition in 1997, a trip to 15 countries in 15 months. He wanted to research complementary medicine and find out who he really was. The second trip, his yearlong "Devotion to Motion World Tour" (or "D2M" as he's nicknamed it), is expected to reach about two dozen countries by July. "D2M" is geared to guiding others in their own emotional, spiritual and physical journeys. After a month at home in

Verona, New Jersey, around Christmastime, he and his wife, Pratiksha, began their journey's second phase in January.

According to Chesney, their "D2M" goals include researching ways that people, especially those with disabilities, can "locate many more freedoms" than they ever thought possible. Along the way, the couple evaluate and promote travel options for people with disabilities, link up children and teenagers as Internet pen pals and raise funds to find a cure for paralysis. In his two world trips, Chesney has been tremendously inspired by the 500,000 children he has encountered, children "who are all seeking to love and be loved," he notes.

Last September during the "D2M" journey, the couple was granted a private audience with The Dalai Lama in a remote village in northern India. The profoundly moving experience seemed to make the Earth stand still for those 20 minutes, Chesney writes in his online diary. The 14th Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet, "is the most genuinely happy, most unconditionally loving, most accepting individual whom we have ever met," he adds. "His words of praise for our work eliminated any doubts we may have had regarding any aspect of our journey and reignited a fire within us that we are sure will burn forever."

Their travels have been infused with many other moments of joy. Chesney delighted in riding a camel around Egypt's pyramids and floating on Israel's Dead Sea. In an

“Each and every day,
I try to practice
non-judgment and
acceptance, and when
I hear about **injustice**
in this world,
I become even more
focused and driven to
create **solutions** to
help others.”

—Scott F. Chesney '92

e-mail from South Africa, he tells of hugging a cheetah, kissing a giraffe and eyeing ferocious lions. “Can’t say I have had that experience too often in New Jersey!” he observes. His words radiate humor, a positive outlook and a spirit of compassion. After struggling with anger, grieving and fear, Chesney has come to terms with paralysis, calling it “the second greatest gift” (the first, he affirms, was the gift of life from his parents).

When he suffered a rare stroke in his spinal cord in 1985, the athletic 15-year-old was a long way from considering his paralyzed legs a “gift.” His useless limbs meant no more running on the basketball court or the beach. But the first time he pushed his wheelchair into the physical therapy room at the Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation in West Orange, he made a courageous decision: “I put my game face back on and engaged myself in the game of life once again. It was one of many challenges to come. But as my friends will tell you, I thrive on challenges.”

Three years into his paralysis, as Chesney considered where to enroll for college, he wanted to remain close to home to give his parents “peace of mind.” For advice, he turned to some friends who happened to be Seton Hall University alumni. They praised the University’s reputable communication program (his choice for a major) and mentioned how Seton Hall was recognized favorably by the tristate business community, he recalls.

As a student at Seton Hall, the devoted Pirates’ fan never missed a men’s basketball game, the most memorable being the 1989 “Final Four” match in Seattle. He traveled with the team while on the WSOU 89.5 FM sports staff, which he credits with cultivating his public speaking skills. “Every broadcast gave me more self-confidence and kept me connected to the game I have always loved,” Chesney says. He also held two internships. In one, he reviewed game tapes for Bill Raftery, M.A.E. ’66, at the sports analyst’s office at the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority. In the other internship, Chesney engineered a program and prepared a sports report for Adrienne Berg, a WABC on-air personality. He had to surmount 24 steps to reach her broadcast studio. “I am so grateful for these most important tests of fortitude,” he notes.

“Seton Hall taught me the gift of discipline,” Chesney explains. “I had always managed to avoid studying while in high school, but I was very fortunate to have teachers who made learning enjoyable in college.”

Chesney is quick to credit others who have guided his journey. “God sent me one of his finest angels when he

placed Dennis Kozlowski in my life,” he emphasizes. Chairman of the board and CEO of Tyco International Ltd., L. Dennis Kozlowski ’68 was so enthusiastic about Chesney’s mission that Tyco became the major sponsor of the “Devotion to Motion” tour. Chesney is most impressed with what he calls Kozlowski’s “track record for helping those in need.” The Tyco executive, who also is a member of Seton Hall’s Board of Regents, has helped Chesney in other ways. Chesney had worked as a fund-raiser and public speaker at the Miami

Project to Cure Paralysis; Kozlowski was instrumental in having the library there named in memory of Chesney’s father, William B. Chesney Jr.

Topping Chesney’s list of friends is his wife. He met Pratiksha only after he became paralyzed. As a physical therapist, she has concentrated on spinal cord injury rehabilitation and has helped physically and mentally challenged children in Newark’s schools. On the “D2M” tour, Chesney treasured the chance to visit with Pratiksha’s family in her native India and to enjoy the Taj Mahal grounds.

His purpose in life, Chesney believes, is to serve others “with my spoken word and written word. Each and every day, I try to practice non-judgment and acceptance, and when I hear about injustice in this world, I become even more focused and driven to create solutions to help others.”

Since January, “D2M” has taken them to New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia, Kuala Lumpur, the Philippines, China, the United Arab Emirates, India and several countries in Europe. This summer, they plan to travel to Brazil and Peru before returning in July. He keeps fit through playing basketball and tennis and loves to sail.

The world tour’s Web site (www.d2motion.com) features their diary and newsletter, plus many resources. They report on how accessible each locale is for the disabled. They discuss a world of therapies, medicine and healing relatively unknown in the United States. And they pause to reflect on life’s journey itself — the dreams, the beliefs, the obstacles to overcome. Chesney reports candidly about what they find. He is hardly shy about answering the questions people in wheelchairs often get asked (see his “10 Questions” diary entry).

“From the moment I was born,” Chesney reflects, “my life has been about movement. For the first 15 years it was about physical movement. The last 15 years have been about emotional and spiritual movement. I can’t wait to reunite the two halves of my life!”