

For immediate release
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College student takes break from studying and operas to cycle across country for cancer

ROBERTSDALE, ALA—Mary-Lacey Rogers, a Mobile native and college student at Converse College in South Carolina, is taking on the trip of a lifetime—a cross-country bike ride to raise awareness, funds and hope for the fight against cancer. And she'll have the support of several Mobile area businesses and individuals, including restaurateur David Cooper and HVAC manufacturing company Quality Filters, Inc.

4K for Cancer, a non-profit association that organizes cross-country bicycle tours benefiting the fight against cancer, involves university students who plan, cycle across the country and volunteer within the communities they travel. Each summer the students of The 4K for Cancer undertake a 4,000-mile, two-month bicycle trek from Baltimore to San Francisco. On the road they participate in community events such as Relay for Life, and visit cancer patients at cancer facilities across the country.

Rogers, a graduate of UMS-Wright Preparatory School, is the daughter of C.M.A Rogers IV, M.D. and Mandy Rogers. She said she applied to be a 4K for Cancer rider in honor and in memory of her grandmother, who died of cancer when Mary-Lacey was 14, her "Granddaddy Max" who died of cancer before Mary-Lacey was born, and her grandfather Ben Hamel, who is currently fighting cancer.

"I had always heard stories about how incredible he was and how much of an impact he made on Mobile, and on his family and friends," Rogers said. "I decided in the fall of 2007 that I was going to make it a goal to ride with the 4K team and to take a stand in the fight against cancer. Since that time I've had close friends and family suffer from the mental and physical affects of cancer. Nothing is harder."

Rogers, a former Azalea Trail Maid and Mobile Junior Miss finalist, said she is riding in The 4K for Cancer 2009 for her grandparents, her family and close friends, the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute, and for those who have suffered from cancer.

"I have learned that if someone close to you has cancer, you suffer with them," she said. "When I cross the Golden Gate Bridge in Francisco, I hope to feel the joy of millions of cancer survivors and those who are working to help them radiating from my bike, my mind and my tired legs."

She's shown she has what it takes to reach her goals, having released a CD in 2006 entitled "Sweet Tea", and performing in five opera roles in Rome, Italy over a six-week period last summer.

She's already into the fund raising portion full swing with the support of Quality Filters, Inc., Cooper/T. Smith, Elcan and Associates and Mobile Infirmary Medical Center.

"This was a chance for us, as a company, to do something meaningful, something that all of us at Quality Filters could get behind," George Spottswood, CEO of Quality Filters, Inc. and uncle to Mary-Lacey said. "Quality Filters has been around for more than 26 years, and probably everyone in our company has at some point been affected by cancer. When I learned of what Mary-Lacey was attempting to do, and how much work it

was going to take on her part, I thought it would be perfect for us to get behind her as a company, and help raise awareness within our own organization. Hopefully, others in the area will follow suit.”

For now, Mary-Lacey is training for the bike ride and continuing to raise funds for cancer research. In addition, she was recently accepted to audition to Peabody Conservatory where she hopes to pursue a master’s degree in opera performance.