

Mike's independence

Harrison grad overcomes special challenges

By Susan Duck
staff writer

FORTUNE FROWNED on Mike Logan when he was born but his determination and tenacity won him a lucky star.

Logan, 19 and a spina bifida victim, has endured 22 operations since he was born on April 13, 1970 in Providence Hospital in Southfield. The first operation was at birth.

Spina bifida is a congenital deformity at the base of the spine in which the spine does not form com-

pletely. The cause of the condition is unknown and there is no cure.

"When I was born they noticed that my spine was open," said Logan. "They went right in and closed it right up. There was a bubble with the nerves coming out and they sewed it back up, but all those nerves were damaged. Those nerves controlled the lower part of my limbs and they were totally destroyed."

This year, Logan was honored by the Farmington Youth Assistance (FYA) for his work in the community which included volunteer work at

Botsford Hospital last summer.

"I was a go-fer," said Logan. "I like to help out people. I'm sympathetic to other people's problems."

Logan performed a variety of tasks, two days a week at Botsford Hospital. "I was in the stroke unit and helped clean the therapy mats that patients lie on."

Logan was nominated for the FYA award by Mike Teachman, his basketball coach at Harrison High School.

"Mike Logan has been a volunteer manager for varsity basketball for three years and volunteer manager for junior varsity for one year. He has helped out at Botsford Hospital, especially with the wheelchair-bound and helps with the elderly in his neighborhood," said Bill Hamilton, a FYA spokesman.

Logan graduated from Harrison High School last Thursday. He went to the senior prom which was held at the Novi Hilton with fellow senior Sue Kupat.

Happier times have finally come for Logan. But, it wasn't always so.

"I have a shunt, a long tube, in my head which drains the cerebral fluid down by an automatic pump. Without it you get severe headaches and hydrocephalus. It's beyond an Excedrin headache, it hurts so bad. Two or three of those shunt revisions were emergency surgeries," said Logan.

Through the years, he has also had operations and surgeries in Children's Hospital, Mott Hospital, Ann Arbor, Mount Carmel Mercy Hospital, Detroit and Beaumont Hospital.

Logan has had steel rods placed in his back to hold his spine and six inches of his right lower rib removed.

Every time a new operation was needed, Logan said he became dependent.

Hopefully there will be no more operations.

At one time, he could walk with a brace. But no more.

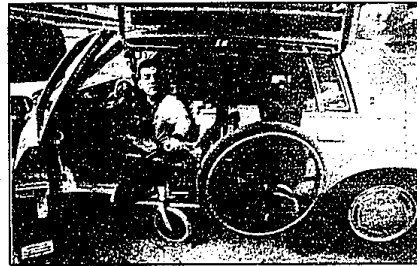
An upbeat attitude pulls Logan through. He strives to be self-sufficient. He drives a Cadillac Supreme with hand controls. Logan works part-time at the pharmacy counter at Perry drug store, 12 Mile and Farmington, and is the first wheelchair employee at the store.

"He seems well-mannered and highly intelligent," said manager Chuck Hatley.

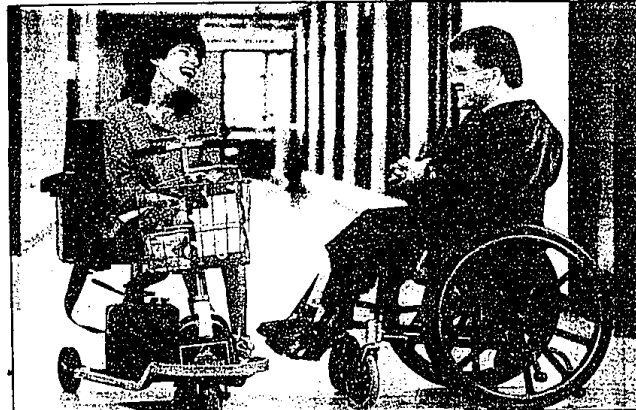
Logan values his ability to be a good listener. "I've been pretty open with people. I can cope. I tell people if they ever have problems to call me," said Logan.

He plans to attend Oakland University but has not decided on a major.

Logan's parents are Maureen, a service representative for Manpower Temporary Service in Farmington Hills and Dan, a vice-president with BASF Automotive Paint Supply Co. in Farmington Hills. He has two brothers, Dan, a student at Central Michigan University and Tim, 15, a sophomore at Catholic Central in Redford Township.



Mike uses hand controls to lift his wheelchair atop his car, allowing him to drive



Amy Krome of West Bloomfield congratulates Mike on his last day of school at Harrison. Krome, who graduated the year before, knows

Mike through an orthopedic program at Harrison.

Staff photos by Dan Dean



Mike waits outside Harrison for "Swing-out" ceremonies to begin, when he will lead the procession of seniors in their caps and gowns.



After festivities on his last day of high school, Mike gets an emotional hug from his mom, Maureen Logan.



Mike leaves Harrison High School after "Swing-out," the senior's annual bash, heading for his usual parking space.



Sue Kupat, Mike's date at this year's Harrison prom, sits on his lap as they dance the night away with their classmates. Harrison held its spring prom at the Novi Hilton.