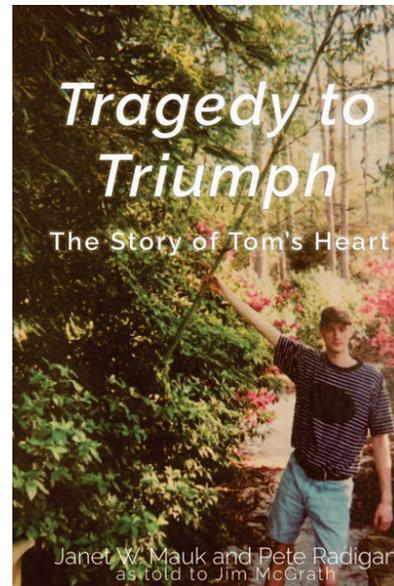


A Review of
Tragedy to Triumph:
The Story of Tom's Heart
Authors: Janet W. Mauk and Peter Radigan
as told to Jim McGrath

Reviewed by Jim Gleason, heart recipient

Did you ever wonder what it would be like to face the decision of organ donation at a time of losing a loved one, especially if that was loss of a child? Or, did you ever wonder what it is like to face death with a failing heart, or wait on a list for a possible heart transplant? In this fact filled and emotional sharing of those experiences from very personal life lived adventures, readers will get as close to answering both questions short of actually living them ourselves. More than storytelling, a donor mother, Janet, and a heart recipient, Peter, take us into their lives as recalled from life journals (daily diaries) that capture emotions of each day in their lives as they actually lived them. In that sharing, they connect daily happenings with life, now living many years later when they actually meet, donor family to heart transplant recipient. **The Story of Tom's Heart** is that beautiful shared lived experience, as told back and forth, interwoven chapters, that will connect with reader's own hearts as Janet and Peter lived those touching and amazing experiences.



As a reviewer and heart transplant survivor of now 28 years, I was moved in connecting to their stories more than the average reader. Additionally, married to a donor mother who made similar organ donation decisions when faced with her 13-year old son, Christopher's untimely death, I can attest to the faithful description of Janet and Peter's emotional journey throughout this very detailed account of both sides of the organ donation and organ transplant stories as they tell them. By Janet Mauk's agreeing to her son's donation at death, another mother and family did not have to face the death of their loved one. Pete Radigan, on the other side of this amazing story, was facing death from heart failure at Columbia Hospital, where he received his gift of life on August 5th, 1997 with Tom's dying heart donation. While it is not common, Janet and Peter were able to meet many months later, resulting in collaborating on this book and often promoting donor registrations in sharing their stories as a speaker duo before many audiences.

I often rate a book by how long it takes me to read it. Some take a month or more once begun. My highest honors go to a book that takes over my life as I stop all daily activity in not being able to put it down once started. When this book arrived in the evening's mail, I looked through its first pages and once opened, finished it in one day, thus earning it my top most '5-star' rating. And no, I'm not a fast reader nor is this a short book, it's just that good! Don't miss Peter's cardiologist written Epilogue and several added pages of important organ donor related resources, including a famous reflection, To Remember Me, offering advice to family and friends on accepting his death, by Robert Test. If you

haven't already made your decision and registered as an organ donor, after reading their inspiring stories, you may be moved to make that important life-saving and share that decision with family and register it with your local motor vehicle organ donor registry.

Note: **Tragedy to Triumph** is available in Kindle format and soft or hard cover books on [Amazon](#) and many other outlets.

Brief reviewer bio:

Jim Gleason, receiving his own heart transplant now 28 years ago in Oct. '94, retired after 37 years with Unisys Corporation in 2005, is a volunteer with The Gift of Life Donor Program, NKF and UNOS as well as a nationally recognized speaker and author. His own book, **A Gift from the Heart**, is offered free online in thanks to his donor family and can be read on-line at <https://www.rjwitte.com/changeofheart/GiftFromTheHeart/>.