

Burke's spirit continues to reach out to help others

A special teddy bear - the Burke P Bear - was named after an incredibly spirited young man, Burke Derr, who died of Cystic Fibrosis (CF) just two days before his 19th birthday.

Although his family in the USA miss Burke terribly, they believe his spirit and legacy lives on in the bear, which is helping raise research money to find a cure for the disease which took Burke's life.

Burke became a Boyds Bear collector about six years ago when he was about 13 years old, said his father, Bob Derr.

Burke had always collected teddy bears, but six years ago he began collecting only Boyds Bears and had over 150 in his collection.

He was diagnosed with CF at the age of five-and-a-half months old. CF is the most common fatal genetic disease of childhood and it affects the lungs and the digestive system.

"Burke never let CF slow him down - even as an older teenager when he had to be on oxygen all the time, he never sat around feeling sorry for himself. He was out to the mall, to the movies

Wonderful legacy in fight against CF

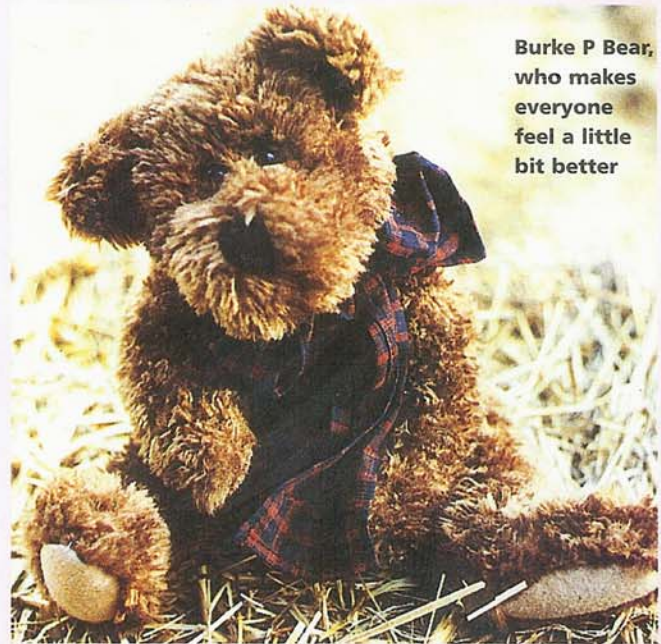
and to local retailers in search of Boyds Bears," said Bob. "He was voted 'Most spirited' by his high school graduating class.

"In February 1997 two of his friends wrote to G M Lowenthal (Chief Designer and President of The Boyds Collection) to tell him of Burke's collection and that Burke didn't have a whole lot of time left. Lowenthal responded, saying one of the bears in the fall collection would be named Burke P Bear after our Burke."

Before Burke died in June, a local retailer Lucinda Marks had the idea of giving Pennsylvania Cystic Fibrosis (PACFI) one dollar for every Burke P Bear she sold to support CF research projects.

Burke's story was put on the Internet and Burke P Bear retailers from around the USA and Canada rallied round to help raise funds for PACFI.

And Burke's family recently received a message from a lady named Jude who has a son, Tommy, who has CF. Tommy is apparently less than a year old and cannot say the word 'Burke' so he calls his Burke Bear 'Burp'. Jude wrote:



Burke P Bear, who makes everyone feel a little bit better

"Who could have thought so much of a young man's spirit could have been captured into the body of a little teddy bear? I tell you, there's something special about 'Burp'. The first time I picked him up, I automatically hugged him and I swear to you, he hugged back! Tommy loves his Burke and takes him everywhere with him.

"My sister is battling a rare and incurable form of cancer, and at her last hospitalisation, I got her a Burke too. She brightened immediately and was also touched by the story of Burke P Bear. When Burke is around, every-

one just feels a little bit better. What a wonderful legacy your Burke has left for us. God bless you."

"Jude's comments touched our hearts, and we know Burke's spirit continues to reach out to help others," said Bob. "We know he's real pleased that his Burke P Bear is raising funds for CF research. And we know he's laughing angelically at being called 'Burp'."



Cystic Fibrosis Worldwide has teamed up with PACFI and Burke to raise funds to help establish effective clinical care worldwide.

To find out more about CFW and Burke or purchase our furry friend visit www.cfw.org.

