



JOE MUNSON/The Kentucky Post

Barbara McCoy, with bags packed, chats at home with her son Dean.

Transplant mother's only hope

By Peggy Kreimer
Kentucky Post staff reporter

Barbara McCoy's friends are throwing a party for her on Saturday. But they are hoping she won't be there.

Mrs. McCoy needs a heart and lung transplant and is waiting minute to minute for the phone call telling her donor organs are available. When the call comes, she will have four hours to get from her home in Crestview Hills to the operating table at the University of Pittsburgh Hospital.

She has a check list taped to her headboard and a suitcase packed and ready. Her children wear beepers.

Everything is timed. "I have to go by air ambulance," she said. "It's a 40-minute flight. It's a 25-minute ride to the hospital."

The timetable accounts for more than minutes. She has to make it to the operating table before Nov. 30, when her present insurance policy runs out.

The policy was through her husband's work. He died in 1986.

If she doesn't get the operation before the insurance stops, she will face huge bills with little resources. Even if the operation is completed before Nov. 30, insurance won't pay the on-going bills that accompany transplant operations.

Mrs. McCoy could not find another insurance company to cover her after the diagnosis. The company that had insured her through her husband offered a conversion policy that she accepted, but it will not come close to covering her costs, she said.

That's where her friends' party comes in. It's a dance and raffle at 9 p.m. Saturday in Covington Catholic High School to help pay for the operation and medication she needs to save her life.

Mrs. McCoy has a rare and incurable heart disease and is listed as a top priority in the national list for donor organs.

"I should get the next B-positive heart and lung," she said from her bed in what used to be the family dining room. She moved her bed there when she could no longer walk the steps. Now she cannot even walk from the bed to the nearby kitchen to have dinner with the family.

Her heart condition was diagnosed last November. In July her doctors were stunned at the disease's rapid progression.

"My heart is so big it's almost against my rib cage," she said.

Without a transplant, it will keep enlarging until it stops.

It's frightening prospect, made more frightening because Mrs. McCoy is facing it as a single parent. She has two chil-

dren, Jay, 20, and Dean, 17.

"I dealt with Jim's mortality, now I'm facing my own," she said.

The help has been abundant.

"You hear about all the stinkers and the rotten people in the world," she said. "But I'm finding all the wonderful people."

After a story ran in The Kentucky Post in July, a Barbara McCoy Emergency Medical Fund was started at Star Bank in Ft. Mitchell.

Fellow members of St. Joseph Church in Crescent Springs rallied. Nurses who belong to the church help her bathe. She gets letters from strangers. The bank sends her notes that accompany donations. A fourth-grade class from Florida sent her cards.

Supporters held a bingo in her honor. Saturday's dance includes a raffle that may be the biggest ticket seller around. "I heard they went through 5,000 tickets," Mrs. McCoy said. "The raffle chances are on their third printing." And the prizes are pouring in, from a complete stereo with compact disc player to diamond jewelry, weekends at posh hotels and limousine-chauffeured dinners.

Tickets to the dance are \$15 per person and include beer, set-ups and food. For tickets and raffle chances, call 331-7526.

McCoy, Barbara L Kampsen 1946 - 1989

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Barbara Lee McCoy, 42, of Crestview Hills, died Sunday of heart and lung disease at St. Elizabeth Medical Center South. She was a member of the Young Widows Club and St. Joseph Church, Crescent Springs. Her husband, James William McCoy III, died in 1986.

Survivors include sons, James W. McCoy IV and Dean R. McCoy, both of Crestview Hills; her parents, Ralph B. and Mary M. Betz Kampsen of Villa Hills; sisters, Marjorie A. Jacob and Jacqueline M. Spille, both of Villa Hills, and Gloria J. Long of Albany, Ga.; her mother-in-law, Mildred Flach McCoy of Ft. Wright; and a sister-in-law, Joann McCoy of Crescent Springs.

Mass of Christian burial will be at 11 a.m. Thursday at St. Joseph Church, Crescent Springs. Visitation will be from 5 to 8 p.m. Wednesday at Linne-mann Funeral Home, Erlanger. Burial will be in St. John's Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell. Memorials are suggested to St. Joseph Christian Fund.

