

“Keep a Pulse on Yourself”

ONE CAREGIVER'S JOURNEY



Deiadra Queary
Caregiver, Milwaukee

Deiadra Queary is a caregiver for her grandmother Arnecie. Her grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2016 at the age of 91. "At the time, I was living in Atlanta," Deiadra said. "When I came home for a visit, I noticed quite a bit of mail had been returned, due to not being packaged properly. That was one of the first signs. After her diagnosis, I moved home to care for her."

"It was important to me that my grandmother maintained her dignity," Deiadra said. "My grandmother is very strong and she was always the person who could do anything. If you had a problem she could solve it, if you needed money she would give it to you. That's just how she was. She always had a common-sense approach to things and always believed in a good education. She was also very dedicated to family. She took care of her own sister, who had Alzheimer's, for five years."

Caregiver Challenges

Like many of the 198,000 caregivers in Wisconsin, Deiadra wears many hats. The COVID pandemic has also been a challenge for Deiadra and her family. "COVID was very hard on us and a real turning point for my grandmother," Deiadra said. "I wanted to keep her safe so we didn't go out much and even eliminated services coming in, like meals on wheels. She has seen a significant decline over the last two years."

Advice for Caregivers:

Deiadra shared several pieces of advice for other caregivers on this journey:

- **Be aware of your resources.** "There are resources and support in the community that are important to know about," Deiadra said. "When my grandmother was first diagnosed, a social worker recommended an education class and I had the whole family go to it."
- **Maintain a support system.** "It's so important to have a network – especially friends – who you can open up to," Deiadra said. "You need to have those people who you can be vulnerable with and talk about some of those hard topics, that no one talks about, with no judgment."
- **Consider therapy.** "Caregiving is very heavy and I strongly believe therapy is a way to help you maintain your emotional wellness," Deiadra said. "I have benefited from therapy and it's so important to keep a 'pulse on myself.' You need to be able to speak out in a safe place without any guilt."

Thank you to Deiadra for sharing about your caregiver journey so other's know they are not alone.

The Alzheimer's Association offers free education, care consultations and support groups for families on a journey with dementia. There is also a 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900) with trained professionals available for support. Please share these resources with family or friends who can benefit from these free services.