

FUNDRAISING
DAVID JACOBSON

Talk about going the extra mile. David Jacobson hopes to one day go a much greater distance – clear across Arizona – to raise funds for arthritis. And not in a car or plane, but on a unicycle.

“That’s one dream I’d love to be able to fulfill,” Jacobson says. It’s an ambitious goal for anyone, let alone Jacobson, who’s had psoriatic arthritis for 20 years.

But it’s not just an idle daydream. The 42-year-old Tucson resident has pedaled for arthritis before, astounding friends and onlookers in the process.

Back in 1992, Jacobson scooted 50 miles on his unicycle in El Tour de Tucson, a bicycle fundraising event for the Arthritis Foundation. Before the Tour, he gathered pledges from people who, quite honestly, didn’t think he’d go very far.

And for good reason. “I walked with a cane, and people thought how [far] can you go on a unicycle?” Jacobson says. But had his supporters thought back a few years, they might have recalled Jacobson’s 116-mile bicycle ride for arthritis in 1990 – despite severe knee pain. He’s clearly not a man to be underestimated.

Jacobson’s unicycle was easier on his knees than his bike. And though he faced odds that would challenge any champion – a seven-hour deadline with a less-than-speedy vehicle – Jacobson decided to go for it.

“I had no idea what I was getting into. It was the most physically taxing thing I ever did in my life,” he admits. On top of that, it was a cold, blustery day. “I was ready to hang it up. I inwardly asked for a little reprieve. Knowing that each mile would go to the Foundation gives you strength, because you know you have a bigger mission than just yourself,” Jacobson says.

Mile after mile fell away, and with one minute to spare, Jacobson crossed the finish line, complete with a police motorcycle escort.

All in all, Jacobson raised several hundred dollars for the Foundation. His hard work and creative fundraising reaped big rewards. After all, no one appreciates the sweet taste of victory like an underdog.

Miranda Hitti

