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RECREATION / HIKING PACIFIC CREST TRAIL

The journey is the destination

Tim Carroll is hiking Pacific Crest Trail as tribute to his father

By Paul Christian

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One thing Mike Carroll always taught his children is simple and direct.

"Go for it."

"He said to never let anything get in the way of your dream," said Tim Carroll, the youngest of the three Carroll children. "He's always said to do the things that I love and not settle for anything less.

"He's the most remarkable person I know, and I have never forgotten that advice."

Mix in his father's advice with a passion for hiking and maybe now you can understand why Tim Carroll is in Day 1 of a dream — hiking the 2,658-mile Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.

He started this morning from the Mexican border in southern California and if all goes well, he will wind up in Manning Park, just across the border into Canada.

On Sept. 18.

That's 151 days from today.

His journey goes through California, Oregon and Washington.

"There's not much that will stop me," Carroll said earlier this week in Rochester, where he was making final preparations. "I'm in the best shape of my life and can hardly wait to go."

FOLLOW ALONG

What:

Tim Carroll started today on a 2,658 hike on the Pacific Crest Trail.



Progress: Follow Carroll at www.trailjournals.com/timcarroll or www.lourdesfoundation.org. He will also receive e-mail at carrti01@gmail.com

Carroll, 25, is a 2003 graduate of Rochester Lourdes and 2007 graduate of Luther College.

He's hiking to raise money and awareness for the Mike Carroll Tribute Scholarship, which will help students in need at Lourdes with tuition assistance.

"My dad means everything in the world to me," said Carroll. "It's the least I can do. I really want to honor my dad's inspiration and encouragement by making this a tribute."

Mike Carroll is a former teacher and longtime coach (27 years) at Lourdes. He was an assistant football, girls basketball and baseball coach but an ongoing battle with Parkinson's disease forced his retirement in January of 2008.

Tim Carroll knows his journey will not be a walk in the park. The Pacific Crest Trail is 500 miles longer and more remote than the more prestigious Appalachian Trail and

he will experience all types of potential hazards, from weather, elevation, wildlife and who knows what.

The hike will take him through 26 national forests, eight national parks and four state parks. The lowest point is 100 feet at the Columbia River on the Oregon/Washington border.

The highest point is 13,180 feet above sea level at Forester Pass, Calif., just a few miles from the summit of Mt. Whitney, which at 14,496 feet is the highest point in the lower 48 states.

Some 300 hikers attempt the trek each year, but "only" 60 percent are successful.

As a comparison, more have climbed Mt. Whitney than completed the Pacific Crest Trail.

The weather will be hot through the desert valleys, but he's also packed long underwear for the hike through snow and sub-zero mountain temperatures in northern California and Oregon and Washington.

Oh yes, don't forget the rain forests.

His preparation started about a year ago.

"I'm sure there'll be times when I wonder 'what am I doing here?,'" he said. "I'll get through that. I've never been more determined to finish something in my life.

"I say, let's go."



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Tim Carroll, a 2003 Lourdes graduate, started on his 2,658-mile, 151-day hike today on the Pacific Crest Trail.