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Great Grandfather awarded 60 year diabetes medal

A patient at The Dudley Group has received a commemorative medal from Diabetes UK in recognition of 60 years of managing his condition.

Bernard Barney, 73, from Stourbridge was awarded the Robert Lawrence medal at Russells Hall Hospital for his triumph in managing the condition. The Robert Lawrence medal is a special award given to people who have lived with diabetes for 60 years.

Father-of-three Bernard's biggest hope is that his 60 years with diabetes will be an inspiration to young people diagnosed with what can be a life limiting condition.

Bernard said, "I was 13 when I was first diagnosed and my mother was told I had 'a wasting disease' which made me wonder how far I could go in life. For anyone who is young and has been told they have diabetes, don't despair, you have a future.

"Keeping stable is the most important part of being a diabetic and with good medical care and support I'm proof you can aspire to anything."

Bernard, who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes on 1st January 1953 at the age of 13, has seen dramatic changes in diabetes care in the past sixty years.

Married to wife Margaret for almost 50 years, the great grandfather says much of the credit for managing his condition is due to the care and support of his family, especially his wife.

"I want to be an inspiration to others with the condition. Diabetes has never stopped me from living my life and enjoying myself" said Bernard.

Consultant endocrinologist Dr Jane Dale, who presented Bernard with his award, said, "Fewer than 200 people in the UK have been awarded the Robert Lawrence medal for reaching 60 years using insulin to manage diabetes so this medal is real achievement and a testament to Bernard's self management of his condition."

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