

July 29, 2015

Our National Treasure, Aja Zanova suffered a stroke July 15th and is in need of our special thoughts and prayers for her recovery.



This is an open email from Dick Button when we first learned of her condition 2 week's ago. An update is below.

Dear All:

As you know Aja suffered a serious stroke last week. She is at the New York Presbyterian Hospital (Greenberg Pavilion).

The stroke was on the left side of her brain and thus the right side is paralyzed. She cannot swallow, or talk although she seems to understand who is there. Her daughter Carole Steindler Whitcomb is there and along with Aja's friend, Georgina Sagar have the ability to speak for her. Dr Pavel Illner of the Bohemian Benevolent and Literary Society is a concerned friend. He speaks Czech to Aja and may feel that Aja understands Czech somewhat better than English as is frequently the case with a first language patient.

Yesterday Aja was given a stomach feeding line to prepare her for Rehab. It will not take effect for a day or two. The thought is she would be moved to a rehab center of which there are several good ones in New York City. The hope is she would move sometime later this week or early next week. They have patient delays so the hope is Aja will have one that is at the top of the list in reputation and also geared for her condition.

Visitors to Aja should know that there is a quiet time from 2 until 4 in the afternoon and Mondays are closed to visitors. Whether Aja can see clearly out of both eyes is not known so any cards should be large letters with clear short comments..(my thought) - Dick Button

Updated email from Dick Button 7/27/15 on Aja's Condition

Aja was moved last week (Thursday) to the Amsterdam Nursing Center at 1060 Amsterdam Ave NY,NY at 112 Street which is across from St John The Devine Cathedral.

This nursing Center seems active and good. They keep Aja up and moving and have taken her downstairs to two sites for patients to keep them involved and active. Carol Whitcomb and the Social Assistant selected it as the best for the type of rehab Aja may need.

Aja will return to the New York Presbyterian Hospital tomorrow to have a cat scan and then return to the Nursing home.

We are working on having her hair done either in the salon in the nursing home or her usual hairdresser (Michael) said he would come by... I saw her yesterday afternoon and she seemed active, struggling to lift her right arm, trying to speak and looking at photos. Dennis Grimaldi felt he could hear three or four words in English. I did not. One thing is she is trying very hard to improve and needs constant encouragement and attention.

Will anyone sending cards please send pictures particularly larger ones and sign their names (both first and last) in large script. There is no doubt this will be a long road to recovery. Please feel free to visit or send messages to her at the Nursing Center but remember the difficulty she has both understanding and translating either in Czech or English.

Visitors are welcome any time even when she is having physical rehab. Please remember when she sees pictures she laughs when she recognizes folks.

Carol (her stepdaughter) is returning home to Florida on Wednesday and Georgina Sagar (who may speak Czech?) and has her Health Care Proxy is coming on Saturday. I will be away all next week

We can hope for the best.....Dick



We have just received word that our National Treasure, Aja Zanova passed away yesterday July 29th. No details have been released yet but she will be missed by her family worldwide.

May you rest in peace knowing you have been fiercely loved by so many. The skating world has truly lost a class act. Your star will remain bright in the sky. May your joy go with you and leave all suffering behind. Rest, rest sweet soul. *Ice Dance International*

Comments from JoJo Starbuck after attending Aja Zanova's memorial service in New York on Sept. 19th, 2015

On Sept. 19th, skating luminaries, dear friends and dignitaries gathered in NYC to celebrate the life of Czech and World Figure Skating Champion Aja Zanova.

As the Star of Ice Follies, Ice Capades, the glamorous media representative for ice shows, and the hostess with the mostess of The Duck Joint and The Czech Pavillion Restaurants which she co owned in NYC, Aja was loved by many. No one knew how to make an entrance like the stunning 5'10" beauty. She also knew how to make an exit as she was celebrated at the mass of a beautiful cathedral and then at the Bohemian National Hall in NYC.

Turning out to honor Aja included The Czech Ambassador to the U.S., the Czech Ambassador to the UN, Martina Navraotilova, Dick Button, Dorothy Hamill, Maria Jelinek, Ken Shelley, Scott E. Allen, Tommy Collins, Karen Kresge, Cathy Steele, Willy Bietak, Peter Martell, Bobby Goldwater and many more.

My memories of Aja are of the consummate professional skating star, lovely lady, compassionate friend and generous encourager of everyone she knew...we'll always miss you Aja!

