

Susman Godfrey's Steve Susman Gets Back on the Bike for the MS150

02.19.2019 | 10 | 21NEWS

Susman Godfrey is pleased to announce the return of its founder, Steve Susman, to participating in the BP MS 150, a two-day 150 mile ride from Houston to Austin that brings awareness and needed fund-raising to fight multiple sclerosis, a neuromuscular disease that affects over one million Americans. The event will happen this April.

In January 2011, Susman discovered that his firm had a team of attorneys who had been riding in the BP MS150. When Susman, then 70 years old, said he intended to join Susman Godfrey's team, Swift Justice, his colleagues said he was too old and too fat to complete the ride, particularly since he had never ridden a road bike, didn't own one and was spending the winter in New York where it was too cold to train. That encouraged Susman to buy a road bike in New York City, hire a trainer to teach him how to ride (in ski clothes around Central Park), go on a diet, and show up in April to attempt the 150-mile ride. He finished, with a lot of encouragement from his teammates, who waited for him at the top of every big hill.

Susman repeated the ride for the next four years and started to solicit his contacts to contribute to finding a cure for MS. By 2015, the Swift Justice Team had swelled to over 45 riders (including Susman's 4 children, brother and grandson) and Susman had raised over \$650,000, which made him the top fund-raiser for 3 years in a row. After the 2015 ride, Susman, then 74, announced his retirement from the MS150. His partner Jonathan Ross, who replaced founding captain Trey Peacock, continued to captain the team and became a #1 fund raiser himself, but last year only a few Susman Godfrey attorneys made the ride.

Susman, however, continued to ride his bike and a few summers ago, while biking in Europe, discovered e-bikes. When he learned that he would be allowed to ride one of these in the BP MS150, Susman issued a challenge to the lawyers in his firm: if at least 30 of them would ride with him, he would come out of retirement to ride this year's BP MS150. Over 50 lawyers, drawn from the firm's Houston, Seattle, Los Angeles and New York offices, accepted his challenge and have started training. In fact, Susman completed a 44-mile training ride with some of them last weekend, wearing a newly-designed Swift Justice bike outfit and riding a brand new Trek e-road bike.

After having assured his donors that he was retiring and that he would no longer solicit them for contributions, Susman has yet to send out his first email blast asking for donations. He claims he is struggling with how to explain his change of heart. But solicit he will, because the MS Society has told him that he must raise more than \$15,000 to have the honor of wearing a bib with "1E" on the ride.