

# Pain... You're Outta Here

Official Detroit Lions D.C. helps former professional pitcher, Charlie "The Gorilla" Alsop, strike out years of chronic pain

By LAUREN MAIMAN  
Special to the Oakland Press

**B**orn in Indiana in 1929, Charles "The Gorilla" Alsop quickly showed signs of athletic talent that landed him a spot at Butler University, playing three varsity sports: football, basketball and baseball. After only two years of schooling, Alsop's pitching abilities prompted him to leave Butler to pursue a professional baseball career with the Chicago White Sox.

During his tenure, Alsop, who got his nickname "The Gorilla" because of his aggressiveness on the field, faced some legendary players, like Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris, whom he struck out. Unfortunately, after being hit by a ball, Alsop could no longer generate the pitch speed he once had. Rather than trying to hold on to the dream, Alsop graciously stepped off the mound, completed his degree at Butler and took a job to support his family, which now included his high school sweetheart-turned-wife, Lillian.

After moving to Michigan for a job at Ford Motor Company, Alsop, who now resides in Farmington Hills, found himself covering a large region, making it necessary for him to spend hours driving in the car. "At the time, I didn't think about the 300 miles I'd spend sitting in the car," Alsop said. "But the way I was sitting was actually doing damage to the

nerves in my back."

After one particularly long trip to Ohio, Alsop fell while attempting to get out of his car. "I couldn't get up," he said. "My legs were dead." Alsop soon discovered he had neuropathy in his lower legs due to damage to his L4/L5 discs

"I visited the top surgeons in the area," Alsop said. "I went to every doctor, saw everybody. The only option they would offer was surgery and I didn't want that. So I tried therapy and rehab, but it didn't help."

Resigned to living with his situation and refusing to take any medication, Alsop spent years dealing with a pain he described as a "high ten" on a pain scale of ten. After towering at over 6' 4" on the pitchers mound, Alsop was confined to a wheelchair, unable to stand because of the excruciating pain shooting down his leg due to his sciatica.

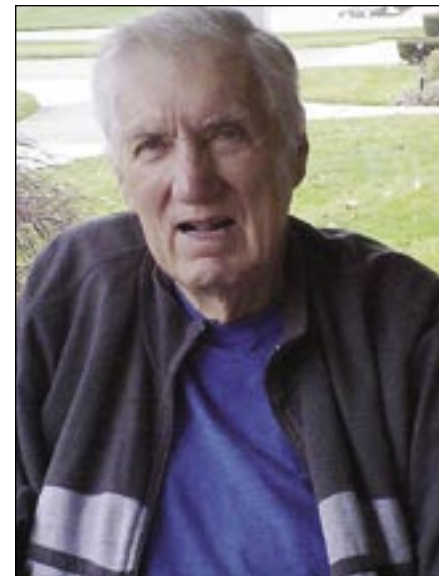
Alsop's life changed when he spotted an advertisement in The Oakland Press for HealthQuest's Back and Neck Solution Centers, founded by Dr. Sol Cogan. "When I saw that Dr. Cogan was the official D.C. of the Detroit Lions, I thought 'that guy must have seen some tough patients over the years', so I gave him a shot."

Dr. Cogan, a well-known spinal specialist, recommended spinal decompression therapy on the DRX9000™ machine for



Alsop's condition. Alsop received treatment at HealthQuest's Back and Neck Solution Center in Farmington Hills, but the company has 10 other locations throughout Michigan. "Too many people sacrifice the quality of their life because of an ache or pain that can be corrected," explained Dr. Cogan, who has served as Chairperson of the Michigan Board of Chiropractic since 2005, a position he was appointed to by Governor Jennifer Granholm. "Our specialists correct the cause of the problem instead of just treating symptoms. We can often make the pain go away for good, not just until a prescription runs out or an injection wears off."

So far, Alsop has undergone 26 treatments on the machine. "The treatment sessions aren't a big deal," Alsop said. "In fact, it kind of felt good to lie on the



machine. It releases the pressure. And after each treatment I feel better and better."

Spinal decompression works through the use of revolutionary, computer-aided technology. The data from a patient's MRI is programmed into a spinal decompression machine, then patients recline as gentle, safe, non-surgical decompression is applied to the spine during relaxing, half-hour treatment sessions. By reducing the pressure on damaged discs, pressure on the spinal column is relieved as well. Painful symptoms are greatly reduced and often eliminated.

Today, Alsop rates his pain at a one. "If you knew where my pain started and where it is today, you wouldn't believe it," Alsop said. "It's an unbelievable improvement."

Alsop has also regained motion in his legs, something he couldn't fathom a few months ago. "Before meeting Dr. Cogan, I couldn't move my legs, now I can kick them around," Alsop said. "My goal is to walk, which I know I'll do again. And when I do, I'm going to play outside and take walks with my grandsons."

## Elevators and Stairlifts for the Home: Convenient, Functional and Economical

SPECIAL TO THE OAKLAND PRESS

**S**tairs can be problematic for a variety of reasons, and for some homeowners they have just become impractical. Many families are finding stairs to be difficult and cumbersome. If you are having balance or instability issues when walking, stairs become unsafe and can lead to serious injury. Two alternatives for a more convenient solution are residential elevators and stairlifts.

Recent surveys nationwide have revealed that many prospective homebuyers have identified an elevator as a "must-have" feature for their next home. Additionally, the increasing cost of land necessitates the building of multi-level houses rather than sprawling ranch houses. As a result of this growing trend, a considerable number of new homes are designed and built with elevators in place. Today's elevators are safe, dependable and economical, adding convenience, functionality and value to the home. The cost of an elevator is dependent upon the size of the cab, the number of stops and its interior design. Elevators can be used not only by all family members, but also for transporting luggage, golf

clubs, groceries, etc. In fact, builders and developers are finding that an elevator enhances the value and marketability of their properties. For new, and certain existing homes, they are a wonderful alternative.

But what about existing homes? Can elevators be retrofitted to those as well? Sometimes, but creating the space in an existing home for a hoistway (a.k.a. the elevator shaft, the enclosed space in which an elevator operates) can sometimes prove difficult and expensive. In these situations, many homeowners are opting, instead, for stairlifts that can be fitted to any stairway — even ornate ones with curves and bends. Stairlifts are an excellent solution that will provide safety and freedom in your current home.

A stairlift utilizes the existing stairway. No structural alterations are necessary, which means no construction hassle or expense. Even better, a stairlift can usually be installed in a single day. Stairlifts are far more economical than selling your house and moving.

Today's stairlifts are very safe and easy to use — as easy as getting into the chair and pushing a button. They are attractively packaged and fold snugly to the

wall when not in use so as not to interfere with pedestrian traffic. Their uses go beyond the obvious; many people like to use their stairlifts to help move groceries or laundry.

When considering an elevator or stairlift, it's helpful to consult with a qualified company for guidance. There are many products to choose from, and while they have similarities, they also have significant differences. It's important to partner with a licensed elevator contractor who will take the time to help you understand these differences and select the product that best suits your needs and budget.

Adaptive Environments of Sterling Heights is one such contractor. In business since 1985, they specialize in the installation of elevators, stairlifts and platform lifts for the home and are an authorized distributor for several prominent manufacturers of these products. Contact Adaptive Environments for additional information or to schedule a free in-home evaluation at 1.800.355.LIFT (5438). You can also visit their showroom located at 43600 Utica Road in Sterling Heights or their website at [www.adaptive-environments.com](http://www.adaptive-environments.com).