

## Pullano again tests his pedal mettle for charity

By: Mike Murphy

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Attorney Peter J. Pullano is planning to spend a bit of time with his late brother. Pullano will embark Wednesday on the five-day, 420-mile AIDS Red Ribbon Ride in memory of his brother Patrick, who died of the disease in 1991. In the process of riding through the Finger Lakes region, Pullano, who is a partner at the Rochester office of Tully Rinckey PLLC, is expected to bike his 5,000th mile and, he hopes, surpass his target fundraising goal of \$4,000. The money raised by riders goes to Trillium Health's AIDS medical care and support services as well as to preventative programs. A man has a lot of time to think on his bike and Pullano, who each year since 2004 has been participating in fundraising rides, often thinks of his brother. The brothers were the middle two of four boys and they had a close relationship. Patrick Pullano was 33 when he died. Peter Pullano, who was 30 at the time, has three children, only one of whom Patrick met. "I still miss him every day," Pullano said. "It's a way to spend time with him again. I think certainly of our life together, but also what he would be like with my kids. If he were alive, what would he be like?" When his brother first became sick, Pullano started participating in awareness and fundraising walks as well as putting his legal experience to good use — he handled wills for people with the disease on a pro bono basis and also started serving on the board of AIDS Rochester Inc. The first bike ride sounded like a goofy idea at the time, but he was game to try, Pullano said. Now, he's soon to be 5,000 miles and counting and last year he topped the \$50,000 mark for raising money to support AIDS charities. "I focused on lawyers and judges, and the response was overwhelming," Pullano said. "I couldn't believe how much money came in. I go back to the same people every year." According to Trillium Health, about 181,000 people who have HIV are living in New York. Medical care and treatment for a person with HIV runs about \$20,000 a year. While much has been accomplished over the years — and Pullano, who has practiced more than 20 years in criminal defense and serves on the board of the Foundation of the Monroe County Bar Association, only needs to think back to when he first learned of his brother's diagnosis to be reminded of the work being done for those with AIDS — more needs to be done. And riders are there to help, and to have a bit of fun in doing so. There is plenty of time for reflection on lost friends and loves ones, but the ride is generally a happy occasion. Opening ceremonies are Wednesday and riders meet up with old friends and catch up before embarking on the long journey. "There's a moment right before it starts when you remember why you're here," Pullano said. "But it's a lot of fun, a lot of laughs."