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For Immediate Release

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Community Temporarily Loses a Key Icon as “Magic Mike” Recovers from Medical Trauma

Gainesville, Florida-- After two emergency surgeries, on February 15, Magic Mike Stillwell lost his right eye to a sudden and severe infection.

Magic Mike had been receiving shots in his eyes as a part of his ongoing diabetes treatments. He began having severe pain in his right eye and went to Shands hospital. An emergency operation was completed to treat the infection that occurred. He returned home and was still in pain at the time of the follow-up appointment. Doctors deemed it necessary to remove his eye.

He is recovering at home, with the help of his nephew, Joseph Stillwell, and support from family and friends. Eventually, he will be fitted for a prosthetic eye which will be attached to his muscles and will have some movement for a more realistic appearance.

The community has been rallying together to offer support and share their favorite things about Magic Mike. They have been leaving such kind comments on his GoFundMe Campaign. For example:

"You were such a big part of my childhood! I desperately looked forward to going to 706 with my family in the hopes you'd be there flipping cards up into the black ceiling- the ceiling always made me think of what the Milky Way might look like, but with aces and queens and black diamonds instead of stars. Memories and joy I couldn't forget, even if I were 99 and senile- I'll always remember how happy you made me! Best of luck on this new journey- I hope in this loss is a hidden opportunity, something wonderful that will reveal itself with time, unexpectedly, like a magic trick. ♥"

-Sarah Stacpoole

"My kids and I loved watching you perform at the library. Thank you for bringing so much joy and laughter to our community."

-Anonymous

If you live in Gainesville or the surrounding area, then you probably already know Magic Mike. For over 30 years, he has entertained people of all ages at birthday parties, corporate and private gatherings, as well as University of Florida events. He was a regular performer at three area restaurants: Bev's Burger Cafe in High Springs, Adam's Ribs in Gainesville and Conestoga's in Alachua. He plans to return as soon as possible.

He is also well known as a member of The Jongleur Jugglers with John Creveling, who perform every year at the Medieval Fair and in the Summer Library Program. In fact, he performed in this year's 32nd annual Medieval Fair (for his 31st time!) just days before the eye infection struck.

Until the closure of Center Stage Costumes and Magic seven years ago, he was the manager of the Magic Department and organized and performed in numerous Magic Festivals.

Stillwell says that he feels confident that with the support of family and friends, he will be able to return to his regular performance schedule but there will be weeks, if not months, of loss of work as well as medical expenses not entirely covered by insurance. It is not yet certain if he will be able to drive again.

His family is reaching out to his fans and supporters with a GoFundMe Campaign to help him with recovery expenses and loss of income costs. He is anxious to get back to doing what he loves so much! He is so adored and appreciated in his community that his campaign earned \$5000 in the first couple of days! He has been enjoying the heartwarming comments and stories that everybody has shared so far. If interested, you can find those details at www.gofundme.com/MagicMikeRecovery

About Magic Mike

While Magic Mike Stillwell is now known for his passion and commitment to entertaining and bringing smiles and laughter to everyone he meets. Few people might know that he actually came to Gainesville originally to pursue an engineering degree at UF. To make ends meet, he began waiting tables at Leonardo's but quickly realized he was terrible at it. He tried to make up for it by doing small magic tricks for his customers. His customers began asking for more and more and finally, so did his manager. However, he wanted Stillwell to JUST do magic.

His desire to perform soon conflicted with his college schedule and he had a choice to make -- attend a juggling convention or study for his last final exam. Thankfully, since he was so close, a forgiving professor was sufficiently entertained by a card trick to award the "extra credit" he needed to graduate. It's obvious that his passion is to take care of his community and add value to people's lives by making them laugh, smile, and wonder!

Learn more about Magic Mike at <http://www.meetmagicmike.com/>

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