Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects one’s ability to initiate and control voluntary muscle movement. Motor neurons send signals from the brain to the spinal cord to control muscles throughout the body. In patients with ALS, the motor neurons degenerate and can no longer send impulses to the muscle fibers that normally result in muscle movement. There is no known cause, medical treatment or cure.

Lou Gehrig (1903-1941) was a first baseman with the New York Yankees for 17 seasons from 1923 until 1939. Known as “The Iron Horse” for his durability and prowess as a hitter, Gehrig was diagnosed with ALS on his 36th birthday in June 1939. The Lou Gehrig Memorial Award is given annually to the MLB player best exhibiting the integrity and character of Gehrig.

About 5,600 people are diagnosed with ALS in the U.S. annually.

In the Greek language, "A-myo-trophic" means No Muscle Nourishment:
- "A" means no or negative
- "Myo" refers to muscle
- "Trophic" means nourishment

When a muscle has no nourishment, it atrophies or wastes away. "Lateral" identifies the areas in the spinal cord where portions of the nerve cells that signal and control the muscles are located. As this area degenerates, it leads to scarring or hardening called "Sclerosis."

Donations collected by The ALS Association (compare same period, 7/29 – 8/25, of 2013 and 2014)

- $79.7 million in 2013
- $2.5 million in 2014

Adapted from information presented by the ALS Association at www.alsa.org