



2014 Floragraph Honoree

Eli McGinley



Tissue Donor

5 days old

East End, AR

Date of Donation: August 8, 2009

University of AR for Medical Sciences

Elijah “Eli” Cole McGinley was prayed for long before he was born. At his parents’ 20-week ultrasound, the tech excitedly informed them that Jodie McGinley was carrying twin boys. But at that appointment, their high-risk pregnancy specialist told them unfortunate news: one of the babies appeared to have a neural tube defect, spina bifida, which causes paralysis of the lower extremities. They knew they were going to have a challenge ahead of them, but they were prepared for it.

On August 3, 2009, at 36 weeks, the McGinleys welcomed their twin sons Eli (6 lbs. 3 oz.) & Walker (5 lbs. 7 oz.) into their lives. But their world quickly turned upside down days later when Eli’s medical team informed them that testing showed Eli’s condition was much more severe than initially thought. Understanding Eli’s grim prognosis, the McGinleys immediately knew what they had to do; give another baby the opportunity at life so another family would have the chance to keep their baby in their arms.

Surrounded by his family, Eli was taken off of life support when he was three days old. Expecting only minutes with him, to his doctor’s surprise, Eli continued to breathe on his own. The twins were reunited, and their parents were able to have photos of a smile coming across Eli’s precious face when his little hand was laid on top of his brother’s shoulder. “The power of their love for each other was incredible,” Jodie remembered.

Eli took his last breath in the arms of his parents and beside his twin brother when he was just five days old. It was that very day that he gave the gift of life so another child would be able to carry on, grow and become healthy again. Eli will always be perfect in his parents’ eyes.

“We gave birth to a hero,” Jodie said, “and we will continue to raise Walker to know his twin brother in everything we do in his life.”

On August 8, 2010, the one-year anniversary of Eli’s passing, the McGinleys found out they were expecting again and, eight months later, delivered a healthy baby girl, Ellie, named after her big brother.