Judy Katz typed her son’s college papers. She buoyed him emotionally when organic chemistry caused him to drop his pre-med program. She encouraged him throughout his law studies. “My mother supported me in everything I did,” Michael B. Katz, JD ’88, states simply.

She also left her son a legacy of generosity. “I realized that my mother’s generosity had a life-embracing effect on me,” he says. “She did not teach me how to make a living, but how to live by giving.”

Judy Katz was diagnosed with breast cancer when she was 34 and her son, 11. “She never asked, ‘Why me?’ ” says Michael Katz, “She continued to live life by reaching out to help others. For my mom, breast cancer wasn’t about dying; it was just one more reinforcement about living.”

After a 17-year remission, the disease returned in 1990. Judy Katz died in 1995 at the age of 55.

In 1998 Michael Katz established The Judy Ride Foundation in her memory. To date the foundation has raised more than $600,000, donating $550,000 to provide breast cancer education, early detection, treatment, and related services to underserved women in St. Louis and outstate Missouri.

“Our goal is to make a difference in the war against breast cancer. We accomplish this each year by raising at least one more dollar and making one more person aware of this insidious disease,” Katz explains.

The Judy Ride is a three-hour Spinning® event. Spinning is a stationary cycling activity demanding physical strength, mental fortitude, and endurance. The Judy Ride symbolizes the ride that all people must endure when their lives are challenged by breast cancer, Katz says.

Katz, who brought spinning to St. Louis in 1995, teaches classes three to four times per week: “This is a fitness activity that exercises the mind, spirit, and heart. Anyone can participate so long as you can reach the pedals; there are no barriers.”

Hardly anyone he teaches knows he’s a practicing lawyer, he adds.

Katz began at The Stolar Partnership before working as a St. Louis County assistant prosecutor. He then co-founded the firm of Goldberg Katz LLC with Lawrence Goldberg, JD ’83, in 1991.

A commercial litigator, Katz serves as outside counsel to the St. Louis Rams. He also oversees national shopping center litigation for The Kroenke Group and THF Realty.

Katz believes the connection among philanthropy, spinning, and the law can be found in the trust people place in him. “My practice, spinning, and the foundation create incredible synergy in my life,” he states.

“Our goal is to make a difference in the war against breast cancer. We accomplish this each year by raising at least one more dollar and making one more person aware of this insidious disease.” Michael Katz, JD ’88

“I never dreamed about going to law school,” says Katz, who graduated from the University of Missouri at Columbia with an economics major. “It just seemed like the thing to do. But the way life is unfolding right now, I’m learning it was the right road.

“I never separate being a lawyer from anything I do,” he continues. “It’s a paradigm of thought. More importantly, I’d like to think a little ‘Judyness’ comes out in everything I do. It’s not about give-and-take, it’s about give-and-give.”◆