



JONI EARECKSON TADA
Founder, Chief Executive Office
Joni and Friends International Disability Center
(for short bio, see below)

Joni Eareckson Tada, the founder and CEO of Joni and Friends International Disability Center, is an international advocate for people with disabilities. A diving accident in 1967 left Joni Eareckson, then 17, a quadriplegic in a wheelchair, without the use of her hands. After two years of rehabilitation, she emerged with new skills and a fresh determination to help others in similar situations.

During her rehabilitation, Joni spent long months learning how to paint with a brush between her teeth. Her high-detail fine art painting and prints are sought-after and collected.

Her best-selling autobiography *Joni* and the feature film of the same name have been translated into many languages, introducing her to people around the world. Mrs. Tada has also visited more than 47 countries, several many times.

Mrs. Tada has served on the National Council on Disability and the Disability Advisory Committee to the U.S. State Department. She has served as Senior Associate for Disability Concerns for the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and serves in an advisory capacity to the American Leprosy Mission, the National Institute on Learning Disabilities, Christian Blind Mission International, as well as on the Board of Reference for the Christian Medical and Dental Society. Joni Tada currently serves on the Young Life Capernaum Board.

After being the first woman honored by the National Association of Evangelicals as its “Layperson of the Year” in 1986, Joni was named “Churchwoman of the Year” in 1993 by the Religious Heritage Foundation.

She has received numerous other awards and honors, including the American Academy of Achievement’s *Golden Plate Award*; the *Courage Award* from the Courage Rehabilitation Center; the *Award of Excellence* from the Patricia Neal Rehabilitation Center; the *Victory Award* from the National Rehabilitation Hospital; and the *Golden Word Award* from the International Bible Society.

Joni has been awarded several honorary degrees, including: Bachelor of Letters from Western Maryland College; Doctor of Humanities from Gordon College; Doctor of Humane Letters from Columbia International University, the first bestowed in its 75-year history; Doctor of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary; Doctor of Divinity from Lancaster Bible College; a Doctor of Humanitarian Services from California Baptist University; and in 2009, a Doctor of Humane Letters by Indiana Wesleyan University. She was also inducted into Indiana Wesleyan University's *Society of World Changers*.

Joni has written over 50 books and is a regular columnist in several magazines. She was inducted into the Christian Booksellers' Association's *Hall of Honor* in 1995 and received the *Gold Medallion Lifetime Achievement Award* in 2003 from the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association.

Joni's works cover topics ranging from disability outreach to understanding the goodness of God and the problem of suffering. Her books include: *A Christmas Longing*, depicting her best-loved Christmas paintings, and *Life and Death Dilemma*, addressing the tough issues of physician-assisted suicide. The mystery of suffering is systematically examined in *When God Weeps: Why Our Sufferings Matter to the Almighty*, a book written with Steve Estes in 1997 which won ECPA's *Gold Medallion Award*.

In 2003, Joni wrote her memoir *The God I Love*, chronicling a lifetime walking with Jesus. In 2011, *A Place of Healing* was released, recounting her journey through physical pain and addressing the questions concerning prayers for healing. After battling stage III breast cancer in 2010, Joni wrote *Diagnosed with Breast Cancer: Life after Shock*, released in the fall of 2012. *Joni & Ken: An Untold Love Story* was released in 2013. Joni's book detailing her latest health challenges, *Beside Bethesda: 31 Days toward Deeper Healing*, was released in 2014. In October 2016, her new daily devotional, *A Spectacle of Glory* was released by Zondervan – it won best devotional book in ECPA's 2017 Christian Book Awards. Joni is General Editor of the new *Beyond Suffering Bible*, a special edition published by Tyndale for those who suffer chronic conditions and their caregivers.

Beginning in 1982, she started hosting "Joni and Friends," a daily five-minute radio program of information and inspiration. Now four minutes in length, the program airs on more than 1,000 outlets and reaches one million listeners a week. Her one-minute inspirational program, "Diamonds in the Dust," also airs daily on more than 800 stations nationwide. In May 2017, the "Joni and Friends" radio program celebrated 35 years of broadcasting.

Joni served as host of a 30-minute television series called "Joni and Friends," which highlights the stories of people enduring difficult trials while continuing to trust in God. In 2012, the TV episode "Cancer – Joni's Journey" was released, detailing her battle against stage III breast cancer, including surgery and chemotherapy. Episodes can be viewed on the television page at joniandfriends.org.

In 2002, Joni received the *William Ward Ayer Award* for excellence from the National Religious Broadcasters' Association. In 2012, the National Religious Broadcasters inducted Joni Eareckson Tada into its *Hall of Fame*. In 2015, Moody Radio awarded Joni its Prestigious *Robert Neff Award* for distinguished spiritual excellence in religious broadcasting. In 2012, The Colson Center on Christian Worldview awarded Joni its prestigious *William Wilberforce Award*. In 2017, Biola University conferred upon Joni its highly-acclaimed *Charles W. Colson Courage & Conviction Award*.

She has been interviewed or featured on TV shows such as "Larry King Live," "ABC World News Tonight," and Fox News' "The Kelly File with Megyn Kelly." She has appeared in print outlets such as *Christianity Today*, *World Magazine*, *The Chicago Tribune* and *The Los Angeles Times* and on radio shows such as "Breakpoint," "Focus on the Family" and "FamilyTalk with Dr. James Dobson." Joni's commentary on disability related issues has appeared in *The Wall Street Journal* and *TIME Magazine*.

Joni and her husband, Ken Tada, have been married since 1982 and enjoy serving the Joni and Friends ministry together. On July 30, 2017, Joni "celebrated" 50 years of living well in her wheelchair, a remarkable testimony to God's sustaining grace.

JONI EARECKSON TADA - Short Bio 2017

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