

SURVIVORS

Bill Redfern BLADDER CANCER Entertainer/Singer



Written by Bill Redfern

My experience with cancer began five years ago. I had surgery and was informed everything seemed OK, although I would need to be followed by my doctor on a regular basis. During the third year after my surgery, everything was not OK. My doctor, at the time advised me to go see Dr. Tchekmedyan at Pacific Shores Medical Group. I had a reoccurrence and needed immediate attention. Subsequently, Dr. T became my doctor. Just about the time my cancer returned, I had retired from years of success in the sports wear manufacturing industry. As one can imagine, I was accustomed to being very busy and extra time on my hand was never a problem, I rarely had any. One day, I was reading an article in the Press-Telegram about the Orange Empire Chorus. The article caught my eye, as I had been a trumpet player for many years and enjoyed music and singing. The article read something like this "If you can yell, we can teach you to sing" ... And they did. I am now the lead singer for the Barbershop Quartet *Sea Notes + One*, a member of the Orange Empire Chorus and one of the entertainers for Pacific Shores Medical Group's Celebration of Life bi-annual parties for patients and their families. I have to say I don't live my life any differently with cancer except now I am a singer."

Margie Davis LUNG CANCER Teacher



Written by Margie Davis

Dr. T and Me:

My association with Dr. T began in 1989 as the teacher of one of his children. Through the years, this association has multiplied into several levels. Besides teaching four of his wonderful children, I also know him as a neighbor, an oncologist for my mother, my father-in-law, and now for me as a newly diagnosed lung cancer patient. His expertise, thoroughness, sensitivity and professionalism touched my heart as he cared for my relatives. Now as I enter this new challenge of life, he will be with me, treating me with the best medical care possible, compassion, respect, and friendship. There are always silver linings in clouds. Among my silver linings is the excellent care I'll be receiving from Dr. T and his incredible staff.

I continue to follow my passion in life as a teacher and appreciate all the support I continue to receive from my family, coworkers and students.

Norman Larker MESOTHELIOMA Former Professional Baseball Player



Written by Norman and Louise Larker

On January 11, 2002, I was diagnosed with mesothelioma, a word I had never before heard. The Oncologist assigned to me in the hospital had told me there was not much that could be done for this form of cancer; that the average life-span was a year or a year and a half from the time of diagnosis. I was also told there were doctors who specialized in this type of cancer, but there was not a high percentage of success. On my follow-up visit to my surgeon, he asked if I would be interested in a second opinion and recommended Dr. Tchekmedyan ("Dr. T") of Pacific Shores Medical Group.

Two days later, my wife, son and I were sitting with Dr. T in his office. It turned out to be the greatest visit to a doctor in my life. Dr. T asked questions, but most of all listened to what we had to say about my life. He told me he thought I would be a good candidate for surgery. My wife had researched the Internet to learn more about this disease and doctors who specialized in mesothelioma. The most impressive was Dr. Sugarbaker at Brigham's & Women's Hospital in Boston and we asked Dr. T what he thought. With his smile he replied, "He is one of the best, and if you want an appointment, I can get it for you." Surgery was done on April 11, 2002, in Boston; chemotherapy treatments were performed at Pacific Shores in Long Beach where I received the best care and encouragement from Dr. T and the wonderful and caring staff. I also had radiation treatments with Dr. Gates. After each of these visits, I left the office with a more positive attitude because of this staff.

I have been told that it is possible that my life span from this cancer could exceed many years, a far cry from 1 or 2 years. I thank God each day that I have the support and encouragement of my wife, four sons and their families and all my neighbors, friends and relatives, and I encourage others who are facing similar situations not to give up hope. There is a quality life after cancer.

Renee Willey NON-HODGKINS LYMPHOMA Dispatcher



*Written By Renee Willey
Renee & Dave Willey*

Dear Dr. T,

How can I ever thank you enough for saving my life?!? What can I say that is bigger and greater than "thank you?" I will forever be grateful to you. You are amazingly smart, sensitive and caring. You are compassionate about your work and your patients. It shows! Especially when you work the extremely long hours and deal with lives being in your hands. I can't imagine the daily stress you must have. You have a world of patience! You are a man of miracles! You are my hero!

I could not have gotten through my eight months (16 treatments) of chemo and four weeks of radiation without your medical expertise and the support of your staff! I feel as if I'm part of the Pacific Shores family, which is an honor! Thank you again for saving my life. If I could have one wish, I would wish for more doctors like you! I will continue to keep you in my prayers.

*Love you forever,
Renee Willey*

My advice for someone living with cancer:

- 1. Don't change your life. Live everyday as you did before you had cancer.**
- 2. Don't give up and never, never give in! Life is beautiful.**
- 3. Never take life for granted. Live everyday like it was your last. Literally stop and smell the roses!**
- 4. Spend more time with family and especially more time on yourself.**
- 5. Do things that make you happy! Go get a manicure/ pedicure, buy yourself a new outfit, buy that ring you've had your eye on! If it makes you happy, do it! You only live once and right now, it's all about you!**
- 6. Keep your self esteem up. Put your make-up on every day and get dressed (pj's don't count.) When you look good, you feel good.**