

# Survival and Hope Life After Cancer



**JIM DILLMAN,**  
**AGE: IN HIS 60's**  
COLON CANCER

"they brought in two surgeons, one to do the colon cancer, and one to do the kidney," he said.

Dillman decided to leave decisions up to the doctors. "I didn't study it because I didn't want to know," he said. "I didn't know what the outcome would be."

He first was treated with oral chemotherapy drugs. Then, after surgery, "I had it all," Dillman said. "Chemotherapy, radiation, chemo before and after the operations. That was pretty tough."

"After I got out of the hospital, I couldn't walk very well. It just devastates your body. The chemo after surgery was too much and put me right back in the hospital. They lowered the dosage, but it was 22 weeks."

Now seven years out, Dillman still thinks about the possibility of a recurrence.

"The kidney cancer scares me more than the colon cancer," he said. "Everybody says you only need one

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*“When you are diagnosed with cancer, it doesn't automatically mean a death sentence”.*

(kidney), but you only need one when you have two. I always worry about the other kidney.”

But, Dillman says, “When you are diagnosed with cancer, it doesn't automatically mean a death sentence. Always have hope, don't let it change your life. “(In the beginning) you thought about it every day. Every time you would get a little pain you would think, oh, now it's back.

“I hate to see there are many people not as lucky as I am. It didn't change my life. I was able to go back on the radio. Obviously, it took a little toll on me as far as being tired. But it didn't devastate me like it does some young families.”

Dillman says he didn't reach out to a support group. But he did receive a form of support for which he is grateful.

“I have had the one thing I appreciate about it, when I was diagnosed — not just a few, but thousands and thousands of people sent me emails and called, not just then but even now. “I have had such a great life in the entertainment business. I have met thousands of people. And for people to still care. I get that on my Facebook page, people who say, ‘We really miss you.’ That always makes me feel good.”

Throughout his tenure in the High Desert, Dillman has given back to his listeners and the community he calls home. He has helped raise funds for a host of charities and causes, and he announces at special events. He also is involved in events for the American Cancer Society and Relay for Life.

“Somebody will call me and say they would like me to be involved at a certain time. I just did one in March for the fifth annual Hope Ride and

## Caregiver Perspective



When Jim Dillman was diagnosed with colon and kidney cancer, his family was “surprised, shocked,” said his wife, Judy Dillman. “Our son and daughter-in-law were there with us. When they told him there was nothing more they could do there — which he took totally the wrong way — they said make an appointment with his regular doctor and go from there.”

But the ordeal “brought us closer together with the family,” which includes two sons and a daughter, Judy Dillman said.

“I had to wait on him hand and foot for a while. He was sick from chemo, but after his operation, he couldn't walk. I had to help him up, into the bathroom ... he was just weak.

“I was doing really good because the kids were in and out or would call. There was a lot of support from them,” Judy said.

For anyone wondering what to do when they receive a cancer diagnosis, she says: “It just depends on the situation. There is always hope.”

Poker Run, although I don't ride a motorcycle,” he said.

These days, Dillman views cancer as a part of life. “When I was younger,” he said, “I never thought I would make it this far anyway. It does make you appreciate life more, but I don't think about it all the time. I am not absorbed by it, even though I had it. I feel sorry for the children that have it, though.

“I want to stay on this Earth as long as I can, but at least I have been here for whatever it is. You look at these children, and you think how sad it would be. I am a big, big supporter of City of Hope and St. Jude (Children's Research Hospital). “We were very, very lucky because we are financially secure, before and after that. A lot of people wanted to do benefits for me, but that wouldn't be fair. Donate the money to City of Hope or St. Jude.”

## The Basics:

- **Resides:** Victorville
- **Occupation:** Retired
- **Family:** Wife Judy and three adult children
- **Hobbies:** Travelling and eating out
- **Philosophy:** Whatever age you are, get your checkups. Don't let cancer change your life, always have hope.

Jim “The Jimmer” Dillman is a radio man and a well-known fixture in the High Desert. His career spanned 47 years until he left Kat Country 100.7 FM in 2015 and retired.

He spent 10 years in Kansas City before moving to the Ventura/Oxnard market, where he worked in radio and television for 12 years.

For nearly the last 23 years of his career, Dillman hosted the morning commute slot, including the long-running “Jimmer and Karilynn” show with Karilynn Haughton.

In retirement, Dillman has loyal fans who not only loved his radio show, but also appreciated his contributions to the High Desert community, where he has lived for more than 26 years.

Now Dillman adds cancer survivor

to his list of credits. One morning in 2011, he was preparing to head to the station, but he was not feeling well. Dillman said he felt “something in the middle of my chest where the colon is, about the size of a dime.”

Then he lost consciousness, something he says was very lucky. “If I hadn't gotten sick,” Dillman said, “and I don't know if that (cancer) is what it was that morning, but if I had not lost consciousness, it could have gotten a lot worse. With just a little pain there, I probably would have gone to work.”

Instead, Dillman's wife, Judy, called for an ambulance. He spent the weekend in the hospital, where tests were run. Judy, one of their sons and his wife were waiting with Dillman when a doctor came in with the news.

“I've got to tell you,” the doctor said,

“he has cancer. You might as well take him home because there is nothing we can do.”

“I was one of those people who was never sick. I was so shocked, it was unbelievable. It came on all at once,” Dillman said.

The family was “scared. We knew nothing about cancer. We haven't had any illnesses like that in my family,” Dillman said.

They all had the same question: What does it mean? Dillman wondered: “Do you have a year to live, two years, three?”

His perspective changed after a follow-up visit to his primary care physician. “She came in just as perky as can be,” Dillman said, adding he thought the doctor's behavior was very strange. He reminded her of the death sentence he had just been handed.

“She laughed and came back and said: ‘It's only stage 2 moving to stage 3. What the doctor means is there is nothing they could do in the hospital, so you might as well take him home because we need the bed.’”

“Of course,” Dillman added, “Stage 2 going into stage 3 still is not great.”

His diagnosis was colon cancer, but before surgery could be done, doctors discovered he had a second, unrelated cancer of the kidney. As a result,



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