

Survival and Hope Life After Cancer



Richard Bounce, 63
DIAGNOSIS: MELANOMA

The Basics:

- **Residence:** Apple Valley
- **Occupation:** Broker at Bounce Realty
- **Family:** Wife Jackie
- **Hobbies:** Golfing, traveling with my wife, attending sporting events
- **Philosophy:** I am most grateful for every day that I am alive. Every day is a gift. I am grateful I can participate and still be alive and help out others where needed.

Richard Bounce describes himself as fair-skinned with "red-ish" hair. He considers himself "fairly athletic," and has enjoyed outdoor sports most of his life, including sports like swimming and golfing.

Still, nearly 20 years ago when he discovered a light-colored mole on the back of his leg and doctors told him it was just a wart, it didn't occur to him that it could be related to the hours he had spent in the sun.

In January 1999 was the first time we noticed it," Bounce said, "and the doctor kinda brushed it off as though it was just a mole.

"My wife kept insisting there's something wrong, there's something wrong, and they

(biopsied) it.

"It was melanoma. I was pretty nervous because I didn't know if it had metastasized or not. I was grateful they were able to diagnose it."

"They shot me with some blue dye and tested my lymph nodes," Bounce said. "At that point all my lymph nodes came back negative. It had not metastasized."

The small lesion required extensive surgery. "They removed 9 inches of skin from the back of my leg," Bounce said.

"After I had the surgery and everything was determined OK, I went in once every month or every other month and had a chest X-ray and checkup just to make sure everything was ok.



"I see the dermatologist once a year now. For the last 18 to 19 years, I have had a clean bill of health.

Bounce said his wife, Jackie, "kept telling me to think positive, to follow through on all the treatments and prevention.

But he found it was not so easy to stop worrying. "I kept thinking my life was over," he said. "I was going on the Internet and reading about melanoma.

"I kept reading how dangerous it was. Physically I was OK. It was the mental part.

"I had to learn to cover up if I went out in the sun - not worry I might be the only guy in long pants, long shirts, the funny-looking hat at the beach. Now it doesn't matter.



"I got lucky - if it had metastasized, I would have had chemo. I was grateful with the testing on the lymph nodes. I am grateful they could do that."

Initially, Bounce joined a support group for about a year. "It was really helpful," he said. "But I got to a point where I wanted to do more.

It ran its course for what I needed. I saw how all these strong people were going through all this stuff.

"After a while I wasn't relating because I wasn't going through chemo and things. I wanted to get involved in the American Cancer Society, and that was a way I could start giving back.

"After I was diagnosed and taken care of, I started volunteering for the Cancer Society and Relay for Life.

Bounce participated in High Desert Relay for Life groups

"I kept thinking my life was over,"

in various capacities and also "signed up" as a legislative ambassador for the American Cancer Society, representing what is now California's 8th congressional district.

"I have been to Washington, D.C. as an advocate for funding for cancer research, and to Sacramento for the same thing," Bounce said. "Mainly I went to Washington for national lobby day.

"I would advocate with senators and congressmen to get them to not cut funding for research. They are always talking about cutting or eliminating programs like mammograms for uninsured women."

Bounce also worked on getting health care for people with pre-existing conditions. He was initially denied coverage from the insurer he had through his job when he quit working and applied for insurance through COBRA.

"I went back to (my provider), and they said they wouldn't insure me because of a prior condition. I said 'the reason I am alive is because of you guys. I am alive today, and now I don't qualify for your insurance.'

"The main thing we were advocating for was people being denied because of preexisting conditions."

Bounce is still involved with Relay for Life. On Saturday, May 19, Relay for Life of High Desert 2018 will run from 9 a.m. Saturday to 9 a.m. Sunday.

"This is the first year it is back to one relay," Bounce said. "The 24 hours signifies that cancer doesn't sleep.

Caregiver Perspective



Jackie Bounce was adamant that she wanted further investigation when her husband Richard was told not to worry about a "wart" on his leg.

Jackie had been married before. "(That husband) had stage 4 stomach cancer and died," she said.

When she saw the growth on Richard's leg, even though "more than one doctor said it's just a wart. I said: 'Wart or no, it has to go.'

"The surgery was all up the back of his leg and across the groin area.

In 2011, Jackie advocated for caregivers to be acknowledged at events. "So often at events, I saw the caregivers would be standing beside or kind of behind. I didn't feel a part of it. I asked: 'Do you have anything for caregivers - T-shirts, what have you?'"

The answer was no. "I decided, OK, I will make my own T-shirts. Then I decided, I will make a bunch of T-shirts.

"The caregiver is a husband, wife, a grandchild. I saw them just standing around." So, Jackie helped create a caregiver chair position with her local Relay for Life chapter, which she held for five years.

"My very first T-shirt said: 'Caregivers, learn to live again.' I gave people shirts with that on it and tears came into their eyes.

On June 16, Bounce will host the High Desert Yardbirds 7th Annual Cancer Awareness Night at Adelanto Stadium. He created the charitable event in which players wear purple jerseys.

"We auction off the jerseys," he said. "Whoever has the highest bid wins the jersey. The event started with the Mavericks five years ago. Now, this is the second year with the Yardbirds."

Bounce is quick to praise his wife's role in recognizing those who care for cancer patients. "Caregivers sometimes outnumber survivors at some of our events because of the work Jackie did," he said.

"(Rep. Paul Cook) honored Jackie with his Distinguished Women award for Congressional district 8."

JOIN US!

May 12-13, 2018

Relay For Life of Barstow

May 19-20, 2018

Relay For Life of the High Desert

Register online to be included in the upcoming events and fundraisers to support our local cancer survivors and honor those that have lost their battle!

www.relayforlife.org

www.hdcancerconnection.com

Liz.mcgiffin@cancer.org 760.887.3427



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Q WHAT DOES SKIN CANCER LOOK LIKE ?

A The skin cancer which occurs most commonly is basal cell carcinoma. It may appear as a non-healing sore or bump on the skin. These should be diagnosed and treated early as their continued growth makes treatment more difficult. If you have any questions about a possible skin cancer, be sure to consult a Board Certified Dermatologist.

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