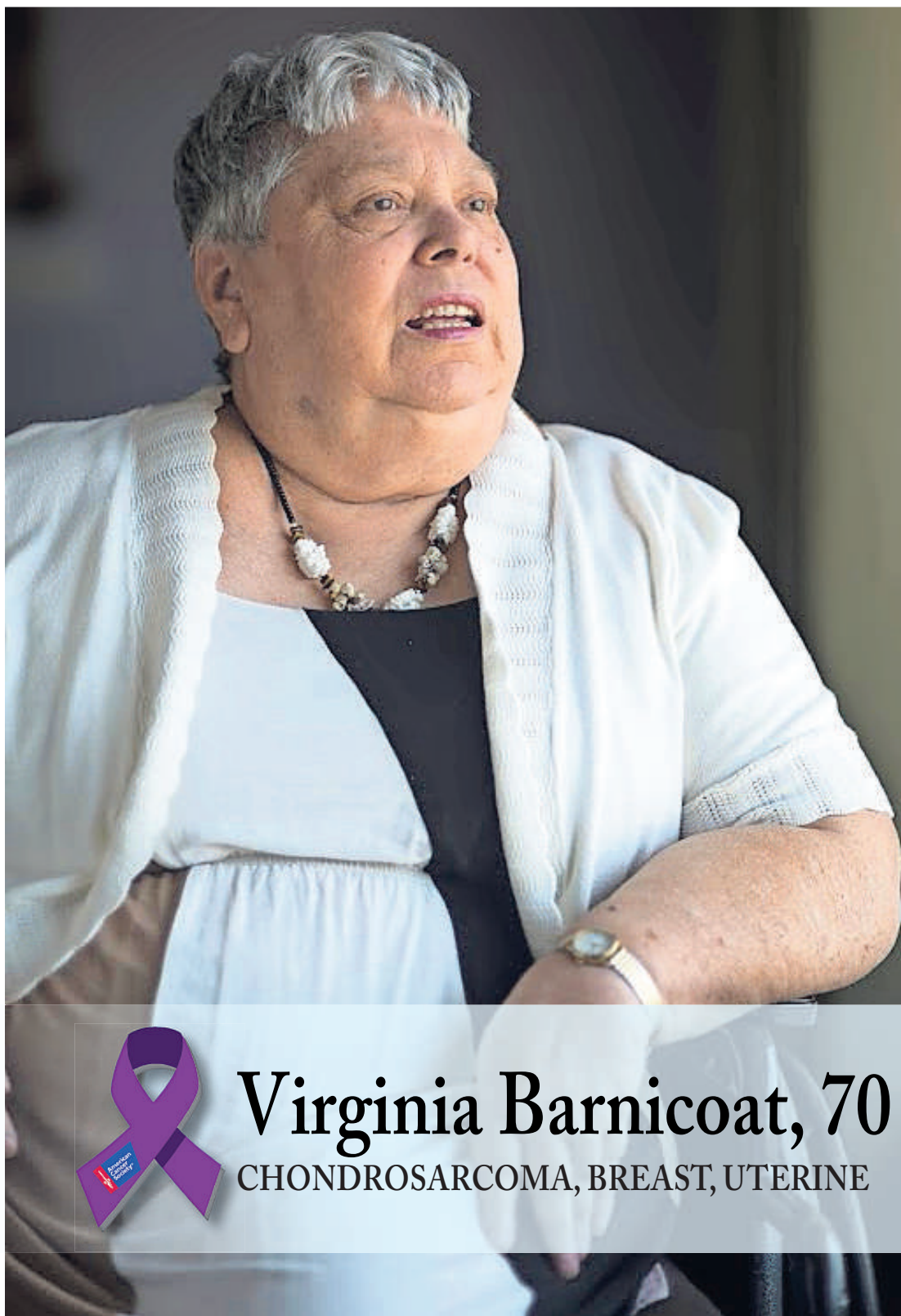


Survival and Hope Life After Cancer



Virginia Barnicoat, 70
CHONDROSARCOMA, BREAST, UTERINE

The Basics:

- **Residence:** Hesperia
- **Occupation:** Disabled; helped with her husband's business
- **Family:** Husband, Dave, 74; Daughter, Janet; three grandchildren who live with Janet and her boyfriend, son, Renny, 11, daughter Emmalee, 8, daughter Ahna, 4; and sister, Marilyn Gunnerson
- **Hobbies:** Sewing and quilting
- **Philosophy:** You don't blame anybody for your circumstances; your circumstances are what they are.

By Alberta Hale Crigler

Virginia Barnicoat is a survivor – and a fighter. The Hesperia resident has battled cancer for most of her adult life. For a person to have two different kinds of cancer is unusual, but Barnicoat has had three different cancers, and one of those has come back.

Barnicoat had been married only seven years when at age 27, in 1975, she was diagnosed with chondrosarcoma, a type of bone cancer. The tumor was in her pelvis, and doctors performed a hemipelvectomy; they amputated her hip and leg.

In a speech she wrote for a Relay

for Life presentation, she said: "I thought I was just too young. I didn't have any children, hadn't traveled very far or done enough to satisfy me. I was told my survival rate was about six months."

Barnicoat survived. After spending two weeks in intensive care followed by six months of chemotherapy, she had to learn to live on one leg and crutches.

Barnicoat said she spent most of the first year following her treatment at home, "not doing much of anything." But one day, the song "A Lot of Living to Do" from the musical "Bye Bye Birdie" popped into her head, and Barnicoat took the lyrics to heart.



When Barnicoat was 33, she and her husband adopted their daughter, Janet.

As time went by, Barnicoat helped out at her daughter's schools, and eventually she joined a newly formed parents' group at Hesperia High School that met during school hours.

In 1998, Janet was in the Tournament of Roses Honor Band, and the Barnicoats took their motorhome to Pasadena and stayed there during the weeklong leadup to the Rose Parade. There, Barnicoat helped alter band uniforms and had a chance to work on a float. As she wrote, "Life was great."

But the following month, January

1998, presented Barnicoat with another life-threatening challenge. She found a lump in her breast, and once again heard the words, "You have cancer."

She elected to have a lumpectomy, but after surgery, Barnicoat was told her surgeon was not happy with the results, and a week later she had a mastectomy.

In 2006, Barnicoat once again was diagnosed with cancer, this time of the uterus. She had a hysterectomy followed by chemotherapy and radiation.

Barnicoat resumed her normal activities, and in 2008, she and her husband traveled to Hawaii to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.

Two years later, the Barnicoats traveled to Hawaii again, and

“I was told my survival rate was about six months.”

during that trip, she developed a cough that wouldn't go away.

Thinking she had "walking pneumonia," Barnicoat went to see her doctor and he ordered a chest X-ray. "They looked it over and said I had nodules in my lungs," she said. "When they biopsied it, it was uterine cancer, and they said the uterine cancer had spread. They said I had maybe a year, 18 months. It was very aggressive.

"I take medication morning and night. At first it just kind of shrunk it a little bit, then it just disappeared. They've never really had that happen. When I saw my gynecologist recently, he just kind of put his hands up and said, 'I don't know why you are surviving.'"

Her doctor told Barnicoat "he had a patient who went five years. That was the most anyone had survived this metastasis. It has been eight years for me. I take the test and the CT scan, and they can't see anything," she said.

Barnicoat's medical provider gave her information about Relay for Life, and "I signed up under the survivors list. From that point on, I have always been there," she said.

Barnicoat says her activities now are limited by other medical issues. "When I was 5 years old, I had polio," she said. (After polio), you got stronger when you were younger. But all this has reversed itself in 30 to 40 years. I have no

Caregiver Perspective



When his wife was first diagnosed with cancer, "I sure wasn't glad she had it," Dave Barnicoat said, "but I was glad she figured out a way to fight it."

Like his wife, Dave's focus was her survival, but his stoicism baffled medical personnel. "Her first cancer was when she had her leg," he said, "and I didn't know this until six or eight months later, but they thought I was an SOB from the word go because I didn't sit down and cry.

"Finally, one of the nurses talked to me and said they were surprised I didn't leave. They wanted me to react when they said they were going to take her leg off.

"I said I didn't marry her leg, I married her. They thought I was packed already and I was ready to leave.

"I said if they have to take her leg off to save her life that's what they have to do. It never entered my mind to leave."

"Bathing, cooking, laundry. I don't call that caregiving. I've been doing that for years," Dave said.

muscles around my spine. My lungs do not have the strength."

These days, Barnicoat sews decorative pillow cases. "The latest thing is making pillow cases," she said. "I have pillow cases for Christmas, almost all the different holidays.

Barnicoat does not consider herself brave, but "well, strong in some ways." She says it is important to accept whatever happens in life. "That's my strength: It is what it is," she said.

"I don't know how much longer the medication will work," Barnicoat wrote in her speech. "Who knows, with events such as Relay for Life, progress is being made every day. ... Someday, there may be a world without cancer."



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.megiffin@cancer.org 760.887.3427

These stories of survival, hope and prosperity brought to you by:

FULL SERVICE LAW FIRM
LAW OFFICES OF
RIPLEY & ASSOCIATES
A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

CALL RIPLEY NOW!

VANIR TOWER SUITE 901
290 NORTH D STREET • SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92401.
(909) 383 - 4422

INJURED?

- AUTO ACCIDENTS • SLIPS & FALLS
- DOG BITES • WRONGFUL DEATH
- SERIOUS INJURIES
- FAMILY LAW • WILLS, TRUST & PROBATE
- BUSINESS LAW • REAL ESTATE LAW
- BANKRUPTCY

U.S. CONGRESS HAS DESIGNATED US AS A DEBT RELIEF AGENCY

VICTORVILLE CIVIC CENTER
14440 CIVIC DRIVE, BLDG A • VICTORVILLE, CA 92392.
(760) 243 - 4488

Se habla español • Free Consultation

Serving the High Desert and Inland Empire
Located across the street from the courthouse.

PROOF O.K. BY: _____ O.K. WITH CORRECTIONS BY: _____

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY • SUBMIT CORRECTIONS ONLINE

VV-00073793 (100%)

ADVERTISER: DAILY PRESS NEWSPAPER
SALES PERSON: VVPINOSA
SIZE: 10X21
PUBLICATION: VV-DAILY PRESS

PROOF CREATED AT: 5/9/2018 9:19:17 AM
NEXT RUN DATE: 05/10/18
PROOF DUE: 05/09/18 13:59:55