

Survival and Hope *Life After Cancer*



ROBERT "CAL" CALDERONE, 82
DIAGNOSIS: PROSTATE CANCER 2004,
BLADDER CANCER 2013-14,
RECENTLY KIDNEY CANCER

The Basics:

- **RESIDENCE:** Hesperia
- **OCCUPATION:** Musician and lead singer.
- **FAMILY:** Ida Bernardi Rios, 100, mother; Ronda Rosas, 60, daughter; Yolette Madera, sister.
- **HOBBIES:** Baseball and Music.
- **PHILOSOPHY:** An old military philosophy: Go until it hurts, and when it hurts, keep going.

By Alberta Hale Crigler

Robert "Cal" Calderone is an active man who made a living as a musician and is passionate about baseball. "I was offered a (music) contract in Germany before Elvis went there in the 1950s," he said. "And I played ball in school, the military and city leagues. When he was diagnosed with prostate cancer 14

years ago, "I just didn't believe it and I didn't think it was so serious," Calderone said. "That's the way it goes. "I was a runner. I just ran so much during that time, and I wanted to keep running." Now, at 82 years old, "I am still running," he said, "but kind of jogging. I have

my service dog, a golden retriever-border collie mix named Goldie, and she helps me out more than doctors can do. "Goldie is the love of my life right now."

In addition to his battle with cancer, Calderone had heart bypass surgery about three years ago.

"I was in the hospital for quite a while. If it wasn't for Goldie, I don't know what would have happened.

"I refused chemotherapy – too many people were getting sick around me with that. So, I went with that laser beam.

"I had 60 treatments of external radiation. When a man gets prostate cancer, it doesn't get better – you are going to have problems."

Calderone's daughter, Ronda Rosas, says her father is an active person who "loves the outside and staying busy and active. He's like me: go, go, go. We are very social people and we like people."

Now Rosas worries that her father might withhold important information about his health in order to minimize the stress in her life.

"Sometimes, I don't feel like my dad tells me everything," she said. "He doesn't want me to worry about him. I feel he holds back a lot to protect me. That's just the way he is."

"I get irritated or stubborn," he said. "I don't want to go. If it wasn't for my daughter, I wouldn't have gone for treatment."

In 2013-14, Calderone was diagnosed with bladder cancer, and more recently, kidney cancer. "I guess it's all related," he said. "I can't get anything out of the doctors – they come up with the famous, big words. What do we know?"

"Even with all these cancers I've had, my energy is down in the afternoon or early evening, but in the morning I am OK. I take Goldie for a walk every day.

"(My family) just came up for my birthday, some



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of them. We went to restaurant row. I am trying to stick around for them and my little Goldie for a few more years.

"With my mother's genes, I might stick around to 84 or 85. It's not the fear of death, it's the when and how. That's where we are all going to go."

Calderone volunteers at the Hesperia Senior Center, and he has twice participated in Relay for Life events at Victor Valley College.

Calderone said he doubts he could have changed much in his life that would have improved his health. However, he said life on the road did make eating a healthy diet difficult.

"My diet could have been different. That's about it.

I was able to do things that I liked to do before all this happened."

"I still do push-ups and stuff like that. I keep very active in my mind and body. It's how I do everything – not as much, not as fast, but I still do everything."

Caregiver Perspective



Ronda Rosas is a wife, works full-time, and is a part-time caregiver to her mother, father and 100-year-old grandmother.

Now, worry is a big part of her life. "I was very upset about my father's diagnosis," she said. "I was very sad. My mom's not doing well either.

"My dad's mom is 100. Now she is declining and it is very hard. Her time is getting close.

God takes care of us all the time. I have three kids and grandkids. I depend a lot on my faith to carry me through.

"My dad tries all the time, he doesn't give up. We are just fighters to the end. I take after my dad.

"I pray a lot. I pray every day. When I jump in the car, before I turn the radio on, that's what I do. I pray for my friends and family."



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