

Survival and Hope Life After Cancer



JOANNE "JOJO" COUSINO (MILLER),
"OLD ENOUGH TO KNOW BETTER"
DIAGNOSIS: CERVICAL CANCER, DIAGNOSED AT 32

years later, we ended up getting married.

"When you are young, you think nothing can hurt you. First, with me, and definitely when I lost my sister when she was only 43, "It shows how vulnerable we all are. We can't depend on living a long life; you have to take it as it goes."

Cousino and her family relocated to Barstow about 30 years ago. "We lost Michael in 1996," she said.

Cousino said there was a support group available in Wisconsin, but it was not associated with the American Cancer Society.

Now, she is very involved with ACS. "I am a legislative ambassador for ACS, and this will be my 20th year doing Relay for Life," she said.

“

There is more hope than ever before.”

"There is more hope than ever before. We see that every year at Relay for Life. The sea of purple shirts gets larger and larger. They are worn by survivors for the walk. It is amazing.

"At one time cancer was a death sentence, but I have seen people in the fourth and fifth stages of cancer be cured. "You have to take care of yourself. That responsibility is on us.

Come walk the Walk:



"At the end of Relay for Life, we have the Walk of Hope," said JoJo Cousino.

"When you start the Walk of Hope at night, you have a torch, and that is the flame of hope.

"Participants use the luminaries they carry to form the word "hope" when they file into the bleachers.

As we walk around the track, up on the bleachers, it starts with 'hope' and they change the word to 'cure.' It is awesome.

"Come to the Barstow Relay for Life on Saturday, May 18. Do the Walk of Hope or walk the Survivor Walk in morning."

The Basics:

- **RESIDENCE:** Barstow
- **OCCUPATION:** Retired
- **FAMILY:** Mary Lee Cousino (deceased), sister; Gilbert Olsen, oldest son; Chad Olsen, younger son; Steven Miller, husband
- **HOBBIES:** Cousino and her husband, Stephen Miller, operate J and S Specialties, a mobile barbecue business. The majority of their time is dedicated to catering for nonprofit agencies.
- **PHILOSOPHY:** With the guidance of our Heavenly Father, we live each day to the fullest. We try to make a difference in someone's life every day. Every day might be a last day. When you live around cancer you definitely know that.

By Alberta Hale Crigler

JoJo Cousino was just 32 years old in 1982 when, during a regular physical exam, a "bad" pap smear led to a diagnosis of cervical cancer.

"It was many years ago" she said. "Of course, everybody is horrified when they hear the 'C' word.

"First, they did cryosurgery, then they did DNCs, and then removal.

"There was no chemo or radiation, I didn't need it. I was blessed to be in the very early stages.

"I was so young and stupid at that time, I don't know what

they removed. Whatever needed to be done was done.

"I didn't have a whole hysterectomy, I know that.

"When you are young, you are just kind of stupid – or maybe you are embarrassed and concerned about your "parts".

"My mother taught me you do the things you need to do. Go every year for your checkup. When you do testing, you get an earlier diagnosis and the outcome is better.

"My sister and I were very close – 10 years apart. I had just gotten out of the hospital, and she went on a trip to the Holy Land.

"When she got back, she was hemorrhaging. She was in the fourth stage of megaloblastic leukemia. She went in the hospital on a Sunday and died that Thursday.

"She was my supporter for that while, and then she turns around and we lose her like that."

Cousino moved from Wisconsin to Las Vegas to help care for her sister's five children.

"I helped her husband, Michael, with my kids and hers, too," she said. "Four



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