



Dr. Dennis Jones

Doctor Dennis Jones grew up as an Air Force brat. His family ended up in Omaha, Nebraska when he was in eighth grade. He went through all the Creighton schools, from Prep to Medical School. During rotations at the old St. Joseph Hospital he met his wife Marianne, a nurse. After joining the Air Force, training in San Antonio, and a posting at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, he and Marianne decided to return to her hometown of Council Bluffs in 1977 where they made a home and raised three sons.

Dr. Jones recalls feeling perfectly fine that Wednesday evening in 1994 when he first had symptoms. After dinner, he went to the bathroom and noticed blood in his urine, but no pain. As a physician, he knew that was a bad sign. He immediately called Dr. David Kuper who arranged an x-ray of his kidneys and bladder the very next day. Dr. Kuper performed an in-office bladder exam and then a Cystoscopy in the hospital on Friday which confirmed the diagnosis of transitional cell carcinoma of the bladder. When the biopsies came back, Dennis and Marianne met with Dr. Kuper who said he knew a urologist from the University of Iowa with a new procedure for this disease. He said this doctor was developing a new procedure and even though the doctor had a ponytail he seemed ok.

Dr. Kuper arranged for an appointment at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. They were met by Dr. Richard

Williams and Dr. Karl Kreder, neither of whom was the ponytailed doctor, but who believed in the benefits of the new procedure. After another Cystoscopy at Iowa City and more biopsies, it was ascertained that the cancer was widespread throughout the bladder. Dr. Jones was given a 50% chance of a six month survival.

The innovative surgery was a relatively new procedure and prior to surgery Dr. Jones read an article from a California medical journal and showed it to Dr. Kreder. Dr. Kreder had his resident retrieve the article he wrote from "The Masters of Surgery" which trumped the California medical journal article. Ten days later, Drs. Williams and Kreder performed

"The best thing to remember is just keep going. You can feel sorry for yourself later.

Don't let it get you down. Cancer is serious but humor helps get you through it. Keep being yourself and the inner strength will prevail."

an all-day surgery removing the bladder and prostate, checking for metastasis, and creating a neobladder from bowel tissue. The surgery entailed a number of firsts as the surgery had not been performed often. The surgery went well and his recuperation fortunately coincided with the March Madness NCAA Basketball finals. Dr. Jones enjoys college basketball. Post operatively, Dr. Jones noticed he had many more tubes in him than natural holes and his NG tube down his nose to his stomach became his worst enemy. Dr. Jones' son Shawn noticed that the morphine pump sounded similar to the sound made by the stewardess call on an airplane. Shawn pushed it repeatedly and the nurses thought Dr. Jones had terrific pain. Shawn also entertained by blowing up surgical gloves that were on his head, not to mention other antics. Christian was in medical school at the University of Iowa at the time. He kept everyone up to date and escorted Marianne when she walked to the hospital daily. Adam was at Iowa State and also visited frequently. Friends visited and the cards and flowers were plentiful. Dr. Jones' patients gave him many cards and drawings and kept his spirits up. Because of the stomach tube he couldn't eat and of course TV was rife with food commercials and he developed a craving for shrimp from Red Lobster.

Eventually he came home, only to have to go back again on Easter Sunday with a fever and then more tests and medicine. He returned home weighing only 89 pounds. At that time, Dr. Williams said that chemo was not needed. He still had bladder tubes but went to track meets and did his walking with the tubes well hidden. Many people helped

with cards, flowers, food, and prayers. He received a lot of help from Jennie Edmundson Hospital.

“I have always believed in the power of prayer and Father Mulcahay from the TV show MASH always said ‘a little whammy never hurts’”

When asked if his faith helped, Dr. Jones responds by saying “I have always believed in the power of prayer and Father Mulcahay from the TV show MASH always said ‘a little whammy never hurts’.” He returned to work after 91 days, and then worked half-time for about a week. He quickly became bored and went back to work full-time.

Dr. Williams and Kreder began calling Dr. Jones their poster boy and had people who were considering the operation call him to find out what to expect. He received many calls from people from Arizona to Pennsylvania. “The best thing to remember is just keep going. You can feel sorry for yourself later. Don’t let it get you down. Cancer is serious but humor helps get you through it. Keep being yourself and the inner strength will prevail.”

Dr. Jones had surgery again in 2007 to correct a blockage of the kidneys. Another feeding tube and one month of nothing to eat and drink followed, but this too passed. Dr. Williams told Dr. Jones that they have changed things after seeing how well his surgery had gone. When Dr. Jones asked what to expect, Dr. Williams said “I don’t know. You’re the longest survivor. We learn from you.”

Dr. Jones had a great group of doctors and nurses in Iowa City and is thankful to his partners at work and especially his nurses, Marilyn and Mindy, for keeping him going. His patients were priceless and he has saved their cards. People too numerous to mention in Council Bluffs helped, especially his wife’s bridge club, Catherine’s Catering, various priests, and people from all over who prayed for him. Dr. Karen Proberts was a stout shoulder. Dr. David Kuper had great medical expertise and wise counsel. Thanks to Dr. Gary DeVoss for keeping the home front in good order. But most of all, his great family and wife who supported him through every part of the illness.

Now he enjoys his grandchildren, family, his job, and traveling with John and Diane (the in-laws). One of his daughter-in-law’s even said he was nicer for a while after surgery and treatment. ■



Dr. Dennis Jones & his wife, Marianne



Dr. Dennis Jones & Family

“The Best Is Yet To Come”

SPECIAL THANKS:

- My Wife Marianne
- My Family
- My Partners at work
- Nurses Marilyn and Mindy
- His Patients
- The Doctors and nurses in Iowa City
- Dr. Karen Proberts
- Dr. David Kuper
- Dr. Gary DeVoss
- Marianne’s bridge club
- Catherine’s Catering