

During this trip, the heat and humidity were something we were not used to. We both had trouble. I did not think anything more of Mom's profuse sweating than chalking it up to not being acclimated to the weather. When we got back however, Mom made an appointment for a complete physical. I thought nothing of this but was glad she was doing it.



With Roy Rogers in CA, 1989

My employer sent me off to Omaha, NE for a few weeks to assist an office that was low on staff. Mom's appointment came up while I was gone. I received a call at work one evening from my brother. During this "routine" physical, colon cancer had been discovered and Mom would be having surgery in 48 hours. I had one more shift to finish out that particular work week, then caught a plane back to Denver and went straight to the hospital, arriving with only a few minutes to spare before Mom was wheeled into surgery. Mom was 68 ½ at this point and came thru that surgery like a champ! All the medical people were amazed at how well she bounced back.

She did so well that when December rolled around, we made our annual trip to Las Vegas.

Life was pretty darned good until late February 1990.

Shortly after Dad passed away, my brother's three children began rotating spending Friday nights with their Grandma. They would get upset when that rotation was thrown off kilter when she and I were on the road.

On a Friday night in late February 1990, my nephew K.J. was staying with Granny. He was just short of turning ten. Mom had not been feeling well earlier in the day but could not put her finger on what the problem was. K.J. had called his mom (my sister-in-law, Mary) to say goodnight and mentioned that Grandma wasn't feeling good and was acting rather "funny". Mary called me and I decided to take a little trip down to see what was going on. By the time I arrived, K.J. met me at the door with the most frightened look on his face. Fighting back tears, he said, "Grandma is in her bedroom". We both went in and I immediately had a mountain of thoughts run through my head as I saw her gasping for breath and holding her chest. I did not want to frighten K.J. any more than he already was, so told him to go into the living room and call 9-1-1 and tell them his Grandma is having a heart attack. In a few minutes he came back with giant tears because he did not know Grandma's address.

I gave him a big hug and holding him tightly while stroking Granny's little head, I picked up the phone in the bedroom and made the call to 9-1-1. Then, as I knew he was feeling like he had failed everyone, I put K.J. back to work. His job was to stand on the sidewalk and help direct the emergency personnel. A giant grin came across his face and off he scampered. I then called Mary and asked her to come get K.J. Mary arrived while the paramedics were still working on the little woman.

After many hours in the emergency room, Mom was discharged and sent home, which shocked all of us. We were told she did not have a heart attack, though they weren't sure what had actually happened. Mom did not feel well the next couple days. I called her every few hours from work over the next few days. On March 1st, I called her two hours before my shift was over. She was breathing so hard that she could barely speak. I immediately left work. By the time I walked into her apartment, she was slumped in a chair gasping for breath. Despite this, when I asked if she wanted to travel to the hospital by car or ambulance, we made it to my car and off to the hospital I went. En route, she was still gasping, but also managed to scold me for running a yellow light!

When we arrived, the emergency room was packed to the hilt. I sat Mom on a chair about the same time an RN spotted us. She came over, took Mom's pulse and immediately yelled to another RN who moved someone out of curtain area to make room for Mom. She was hooked up to monitors as I moved my vehicle from the ER entrance to a parking spot. The little woman was having a massive heart attack.