

Godfrey Never Fatalist Regarding His Cancer Bout



THEN AND NOW—Two photos of veteran radio television personality, Arthur Godfrey, show him as he looked in 1934 and now. (UPI)

By FREDERICK H. TZECH
United Press International
New York (UPI)—On the last day of April, 1959, radio-television personality Arthur Godfrey underwent surgery for removal of a malignant tumor on his left lung. Two weeks later he walked out of the hospital and, with tears in his eyes, told reporters: "I got a break."

His cancer had been discovered early enough to be operable and all indications were that the surgeon had gotten it all.

It is a medical rule of thumb that if cancer does not recur within five years it can be considered cured.

Godfrey is nearing the start of his fifth year since surgery and none of his frequent medical check-ups has revealed any recurrence.

"I've been mighty lucky," said the red-haired entertainer, looking back on four busy, productive years since his operation. "I was lucky on two counts. First, I had common sense enough to have a doctor investigate a pain I had, although it was very slight, only an irritation.

"Second, I had the services of not only a competent doctor but a courageous one."

Statistically, Godfrey apparently will be among the fortunate 5 per cent of lung cancer victims who recover. According to the American Cancer society, cancer of the lungs is one of the most difficult to diagnose early and, therefore, only about one person in 20 is cured. For all types of cancer, the ratio of cures is one in three.

Pacing about his spacious office in the CBS Radio building, Godfrey spoke urgently and at length about cancer "education"—getting across to the public the need for early detection and frequent medical check-ups.

"Detection in time can save one in two cancer patients, instead of the one in three that survive now," he said. "It makes sense to me for persons over 35 to go to their doctor once every six months. Little Time

"It requires so little time and, if you're okay, you can breathe easier."

It is Godfrey's considered opinion that many persons are afraid to undergo a cancer-detection examination.

"They think, 'Gosh, he (a doctor) might find something,'" Godfrey said.

"This I can't understand, if he's going to find something, he's going to find it sooner or later anyway, so you might as well get it out in time."

Another thing that frightens people away from detection check-ups is a fatalistic outlook about cancer, Godfrey believes.

"They have known people in whom cancer was discovered too late for effective surgery," he said. "The result is that the inoperable patient looks like a vegetable and the people feel, 'Oh, Lord, there is no cure so why live on like this?'"

Cancer Removed

"Some people are fortunate, like myself," said Godfrey. "It was discovered soon enough to permit removal. After the operation, people

said to me, 'You look great.' They were shocked; they expected a walking skeleton—a cadaver on his feet. They believed that once you had cancer there was no hope."

Godfrey, who will be 60 on Aug. 31, is walking proof that there indeed is hope. He is active. He looks trim and fit. He says he feels fine.

Has his bout with cancer forced him to slow down his broadcasting activities and his many activities away from the studio?

"Not one damn bit," insists Godfrey who trains horses, flies airplanes and swims regularly.

He commutes weekly from his farm in Virginia to New York where he tapes his five-a-week morning radio program, "Arthur Godfrey Time," between Monday and Thursday. Then Godfrey pilots his own plane back to Virginia for the long week end. On the farm, he trains his horses and an elephant. Godfrey also has three television specials scheduled.

In addition, Godfrey has taken an active role in the educational activities of the American Cancer society.

A close associate of the entertainer said he never spoke of his inner thoughts or ap-

prehensions after his cancer was discovered, except to say once that there were so many things he still wanted to learn or do.

Study a Hobby

Godfrey long had been a voracious reader and was constantly studying something. He makes a hobby of

study and since his illness he has plunged into the academics with greater vigor. Right now, he's deep into a course on the new mathematics.

Godfrey was never a fatalist during his seige with cancer and the period of uncertainty which followed. But he's a realist.

"No one ever got out of this world alive," he said. "Every day when you get into your car—even to go two blocks—you must say to yourself, 'I had no control when I came and I'll have no control when I go.'"

"You just do your best in your allotted time."

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Oregon Supreme Court Decisions

Salem (UPI)—A contested school district reorganization election in Wasco county was upheld Wednesday by the Supreme Court.

Some residents, and the Harvey Aluminum Co. of The Dalles, challenged the election. They contended the circulation and signing of the petitions had been improperly handled.

The Supreme Court agreed with Wasco County Circuit Judge M. W. Wilkinson that there had been "substantial compliance with the statutory requirements" to make the election valid.

In another case, the Court denied a workmen's compensation claim for a laborer who cut off the tips of two fingers while clearing part of a lot. He was the employee of a landscape gardener at the time.

Commission Upheld

The court denial upheld the State Industrial Accident Commission and reversed Multnomah County Circuit Judge Alfred Sulmonetti.

Although landscape garden-

ing is not listed as a hazardous occupation, the workman contended he was performing the separate, hazardous job of land clearing.

The high court said the controlling factor is the occupation of the employer, and there was no evidence to indicate the employer had changed his occupation from landscape gardening to land clearing.

The Supreme Court agreed with the Clackamas County Circuit Court in upholding a special fire protection district election involving District 71.

Suit Tossed Out

The lower court had tossed out a suit seeking to set aside the special election because of a line on the ballot separating the question and the statement of reasons.

The Supreme Court said there was substantial compliance with the election law.

The Supreme Court affirmed the Clackamas county conviction of Anthony B. Otten for assault and armed robbery. Otten was given a life sentence.

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