

## JOHN WOOD, ACTOR



*"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may  
Old time is still a flying..."*

Robert Herrick 1591-1694

Dear Friend,

I still remember the dreadful chill that spread over me when my wife Leslie came out and said "It's cancer".

A routine mammogram found an "irregularity".

At first we weren't too worried. She'd had unusual lumps before.

Then we got the results of the biopsy - an 18mm tumour in a milk duct; quite advanced.

I felt like I'd been shot.

Within a week Leslie was in hospital having the lump removed.

My grandmother died of cancer - slowly and painfully - long before I was born.

My mother was only 11, but she remembered vividly the terrible pain and carried the fear of it all her life.

And my wife's brother died of cancer at 21. Three years earlier he'd complained of a sprained ankle that wouldn't heal.

He went into hospital to have it treated. They found he had bone cancer. He had surgery to remove it, but it had already spread, undetected, to his skull.

So you can see why Leslie's diagnosis of cancer hit us so hard.

It was utterly chilling.

It changed the way I see the world.

Things that seemed important before, like renovating the house,

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suddenly became less significant.

Life and relationships were far more important.

We don't necessarily do things a lot differently. We both still work. But we find we look at life differently.

We take the time to "gather ye rosebuds while ye may . . ." as the poet Robert Herrick put it; we take the time to enjoy the things we have, right now, because time is passing and we don't know when we might not be able to.

It looks like Leslie will be fine. The lump was removed. She's had radiotherapy and it seems as if she'll be alright.

But I'm sure you'll understand from this story why I am especially honoured to be an Ambassador for Cancer Council NSW.

As a supporter of Cancer Council I am writing to you to ask you to consider something very important and that you might find quite personal.

It's this: have you made a Will? And if you have, is it up-to-date?

Around half of all Australians are intestate (no it's not a nasty disease - it just means you have no Will).

If you die without a Will - as sometimes happens, particularly in the case of car accidents, or heart attacks - it can take months or years to work out the legal issues involved, sometimes leaving those who depend on you with inadequate or no support.

In some cases, where there is no close family and it's not clear who inherits the estate, it all just goes to the government.

To make it easy for you, Cancer Council has produced a helpful, free booklet about making your Will.

You'll find in it a free Will form - something like the kind of Will form you can buy in most newsagencies, only free - and a Codicil form, that you can, if you wish, use to make simple changes to your Will.

If you'd rather see a solicitor about your Will, the booklet contains a whole list of useful questions to ask them.

There's also a list of things to prepare, so that when you do see your solicitor, you'll be well informed about what to ask for.

I'm sure the booklet will save you time and help you get everything you need from your solicitor.

next please...

I've also enclosed a bookmark for you.

It's a tiny sample of the type of material you get in the booklet, although you'll find the booklet goes into much more detail.

I want to be straight with you though - the booklet also asks you to consider whether you might leave a bequest to Cancer Council.

You don't have to leave a bequest. Indeed there's absolutely no obligation for you to do so if you ask for the booklet.

But it's really worth thinking about.

There is so much that can be done to beat cancer.

For example Cancer Council are currently funding three research projects into pancreatic cancer, which remains almost as deadly today as it was 50 years ago.

Cancer of the pancreas has a 93% death rate and can kill within weeks of diagnosis. Cancer Council is determined to beat pancreatic cancer.

And they are very hopeful that long-term funding of research will provide some clues and answers that will eventually turn into effective treatments that may lessen the impact of this dreadful form of cancer.

As well, Cancer Council provides support to cancer patients, information to families and patients, and education about cancer and cancer prevention.

It also provides hostels for people having cancer treatment, which are often used by country people who have to go to Sydney or a major centre for treatment.

The statistics tell us that roughly one in two Australians will get cancer at some time in their lives.

Just in my own family, I can see evidence of that.

We've been lucky really, that it hasn't struck any of us younger.

A few years ago I got a letter from a lady whose niece was in hospital with cancer. Her niece loved Blue Heelers, so I volunteered to visit her to take her a T-shirt.

I'll never forget this girl. There was nothing left of her. I was so glad to do something for her, however small.

She died a couple of days after I saw her, and I can only hope I gave her a few moments of pleasure.

Thinking of her, my heart goes out to all those families who have a child or another family member who has cancer.

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So please consider the free information about Will making and bequests that Cancer Council has prepared for you. You can send for it today using the Acceptance form I have enclosed.

If you do choose to include Cancer Council in your Will.

I'd like to invite you to join a very special group called the Daffodil Circle.

It's a group of those who have generously decided to leave a bequest to Cancer Council to help beat cancer.

As a member you'll get special invitations to select events a couple of times a year. You will hear about recent research or developments, and you'll get to meet other people like you, who are also supporting Cancer Council in this way.

If you send for the booklet, there's no obligation to make a bequest to Cancer Council. Any enquiry you make will be kept completely confidential.

And remember, you don't have to be rich to leave a bequest. You can choose to leave a specific amount, a percentage, or even the leftover after all your family and loved ones have been taken care of (known as the residual).

It will all make a difference.

Whatever you do, please make sure you have a Will and that you provide for those you love.

And use the bookmark I have enclosed, or, if you wish, give it to a friend so they can send for the free booklet themselves.

And when you do sit down to make your Will, take a moment to think of those you love; and make sure you "gather ye rosebuds while ye may".

Please consider Cancer Council in your Will. You never know who it might help.

Yours sincerely



John Wood  
Ambassador  
Cancer Council NSW.

PS If you do decide to leave something to Cancer Council in your Will, please accept my invitation to join the Daffodil Circle. I'd be delighted to meet you at one of the events. And send for the free Will form and booklet today. Even if you already have a Will, you can use it to double check you've asked your solicitor all the right questions.