

Caregiver Story: Kirk Tobiassen

Orange County, CA Local 3631 / Fire Fighter & Paramedic

Diagnosed with esophageal cancer in 2022

LODD 2022

(Written by his daughter, Nicole Tobiassen)

My Dad, Kirk Tobiassen, was an Orange County fire fighter/paramedic who dedicated his life to his profession for a little over 30 years. Many know him as Toby and being the life of the party. He was always down to have a good time.

He was diagnosed with stage 4 esophageal cancer in June 2022. He had a 6-inch cancerous tumor in his throat that caused him so much pain, and it was a challenge for him to swallow anything, including liquids. The cancer had metastasized to his stomach and liver, causing more pain and complications while in the hospital.

As a family, we had some hope he would be able to survive for another year while on chemotherapy. Unfortunately, he passed away nine days after being diagnosed with cancer.

It was kind of surreal to experience the loss of my dad after getting a glimpse of hope. I can still remember being in the hospital and having the doctor come in and say the chemotherapy would not help and would actually cause the tumor in his throat to rupture.

Comfort care was the best option. It felt like someone had punched me in my gut. It's extremely humbling to watch how quick cancer can take over a loved one and turn fatal.

My dad's death was a huge loss for our family as well as the community of San Clemente. I think about life events that my dad won't be able to experience. Walking me down the aisle at my wedding, being a grandpa to my future kids, or just simply enjoying retirement, which he worked so hard for.

My dad was so quick to help others, I only wish he would have wanted to help himself. Cancer is real. Cancer is painful. Cancer not only affects the one who has it, but the loved ones around them.

