

## Surviving a Heart Attack

By J. Ward Russell  
(From a letter to friends)

MORT BERK, my cardiologist and long-time friend, summed it up perfectly the other day when he said "Russell, I've known a lot of s.o.b.'s in my life time, but you're without doubt the luckiest s.o.b. I've ever known." I have to agree.

I don't know if you are aware of all the "gory" details as to how lucky I was — but consider the following. It rivals anything a Hollywood playwright could produce.

1—If my heart had to "conk out," it picked the right spot—almost directly across the street from the Outrigger Canoe Club. If it had been on the other side of Kapiolani Park you wouldn't be getting this letter.

2—Following me about 50 to 100 yards was another jogger, Henno Tarikas, an assistant in radiology at Straub Clinic. With his medical training he was able to start cardiac pulmonary resuscitation within seconds after I collapsed. How lucky can one get?

Incidentally, it was Henno's second attempt at saving a life. His first, about a year ago, he lost. As he said to me later, "I didn't want to make it two in a row!"

3—A FEW MINUTES later along came another jogger and friend.

*How he had his heart attack — and lived — is told by J. Ward Russell, 62, former state senator, active figure in community affairs and executive of Hawaiian Telephone Co. The attack was May 18. Russell is now back to work.*

Hugh Foster. By that time a small crowd had gathered. Hugh asked if anyone had called an ambulance.

Luckily — no one had. I say luckily because if someone had, Dr. Sharon Bintliff would probably never have been called to the scene.

As it turned out, when Hugh ran across to the Outrigger Canoe Club to put in the call for the ambulance, he spotted Sharon having a cup of



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coffee in the club's snack bar.

He told her what had happened and she dashed across the street to my rescue — and I do mean rescue. She took over CPR, pumping on my chest, with Henno administering mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

4—The ambulance crew arrived shortly afterwards and, in seconds,

had set up their life-saving procedures: injections, EKG screen, intravenous feeding, walky-talky communications with the hospital, the works!

Just like on TV! As bystanders have told me, they did a fantastically professional job. Lucky again.

5—Incredibly lucky — Sharon wouldn't give up! I understand when she arrived on the scene my heart was fibrillating — no discernible pulse. Minutes passed, still no pulse, but she wouldn't stop pumping.

Wakefield Mist, who arrived on the scene after Sharon did, said he timed her and she pumped incessantly for over 30 minutes from the time of his arrival.

Finally, evidently as a last resort, I was "zapped" with an electrical shock. No response. The ambulance attendants shook their heads.

Sharon refused to stop and kept on pumping. Suddenly a blip appeared on the screen, then another and another, and my heart was working.

6—Luck continues to smile on me. There doesn't appear to be any serious or permanent damage. After some nine days in hospitals and a short recuperative period at home, I'm back at the office feeling fine — except for a helluva sore chest. But I'm not complaining!

7—Luckiest of all — to find there are so many wonderful friends who care.

### Neighborhood CPR Program

The first neighborhood cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) program on Oahu is that of the Hawaii Kai Fun Runners. It has trained more than 400 people in the last 18 months.

The runners bought six mannekins at \$460 each that trainees use to simulate rescue breathing and heart compression.

Instruction periods, four hours in duration, are staged weekly, sometimes weekdays, sometimes

evenings, sometimes weekends, at Koko Head District Park.

Persons interested may call Dianne Mehta, program coordinator, at 395-6861.

The Fun Runners were founded by the late Val Nolasco, a heart attack victim who became a marathon runner. Nolasco collapsed and died recently while jogging. He could not be saved even through CPR was available promptly. CPR, however, has a proved ability to help both heart attack and drowning victims.