

Rodna Smiton, 54  
Clearwater, Florida

Surgery at AdventHealth Carrollwood (Fla.) under the care of Brian Palumbo, MD and in coordination with the Pioneer Medical Foundation in Tampa  
December 4, 2022, left hip replacement

Rodna Smiton, 54, of Clearwater, Florida, has always lived in a world of possibilities. Literally.

She lived in the Bahamas as a little girl. It was there that at the age of eight, she was waiting for her Dad to pick her up from school. She was on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor balcony outside. Kids were running behind her. Next thing she knew she was pushed over the side of a balcony. It destroyed her left hip and it wasn't until the next year (1977) that she and her parents moved to Florida where she had surgery and was able to return almost fully to the quality of life she enjoyed.

Pain had been a constant for her then and in recent years as she has gotten older. Her left hip is now bone on bone and her two knees hurt because of the hip and the added pressure she is putting on them. The pain has returned, is persistent and has led to her limiting time and activities with her husband and two daughters, playing with her three grandchildren, enjoying dance and even reducing her ability to stand on the job.

Despite these setbacks, her upbeat personality, spiritual center and overall optimism have prevailed. After working in restaurants as a younger woman, she found new career options with Albertson's where she spent 21 years – initially on her feet as a cashier all day, assistant scan coordinator, assistant front end manager, front end manager, and eventually bookkeeping which allowed her to sit all day.

When Albertson's sold the company and Rodna's store was closed, she explored new possibilities again. She got her Bachelor's Degree in healthcare administration knowing a job in the field would be more sedentary but she then found a passion in her current work with churches. She works part time at three in her area, mostly in daycare and child ministries.

She and her husband Corey, now take early morning swims on weekends, where it is quiet and she is not surrounded by other people. They met in Ft Lauderdale and got married in 1988. He worked for United Healthcare until he was laid off with the other 49 employees across the USA every month due to cheaper overseas outsourcing. This was before the pandemic. So, between his unemployment and her pain they've led a quieter life and without insurance.

The leg has been a compass for what she can and cannot do, she says, and she continues to see what is possible while making accommodations for her pain. "I've become very self-conscious now. Some days the pain is worse than usual and my limp is greater. I used to use my cane once in a while but now it is all the time."

After a visit to a free clinic in the area, Rodna learned about Pioneer Medical Foundation (PMF) and Operation Walk USA (OWUSA) and its annual holiday tradition of providing free joint

replacements for patients who can't afford them. She applied to OWUSA about a year ago and found out she was accepted this summer. "I felt so great and surprised and that I was one of the ones chosen. I was so happy and excited though a little nervous as well."

Her family is excited for her too. On December 4, Rodna will have her left hip replaced under the care of orthopaedic surgeon Brian Palumbo, MD, at AdventHealth Carrollwood (Fla.) and in coordination with Pioneer Medical Foundation.

In just a few short weeks, Rodna's world will open up to all new possibilities. Again.