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Couple who wed in hospital an hour before surgery return

Barry Spargo's leg injuries were described by doctors as "catastrophic". The fact he was able to walk out of Campbelltown Hospital nine months later was hailed a miracle.

Mr Spargo walked back into the hospital this month, 37 years after his motorbike accident, for the first time. It had been a long time between visits but one he described as necessary.

"Coming back this time was a celebration. Two of my granddaughters (Natalia and Amelia Dawson) now work there as nurses," Mr Spargo said.

"Knowing they are both working in the place that kept me going and saved my legs is definitely a full circle moment."

Mr Spargo was admitted to the hospital in 1982 following a motorbike accident. A truck clipped him from behind on his way to work in the early hours of the morning.

A Liverpool hairdresser came out of the darkness and helped Mr Spargo. She helped elevate his right leg and stop any bleeding in an attempt to save it. "If she hadn't stopped, I may not have made it," Mr Spargo said.

He was taken to Campbelltown Hospital. The decision to amputate was "touch and go" as he endured 12 surgeries in 24 days under orthopaedic surgeon Peter Giblin.

Prior to that final surgery, Gail asked Barry to marry her. With an hour to spare before that final surgery, she drove home and grabbed clothes, her mother hopped in the car and they picked up their two boys from school.

"I went to the jeweller and got a ring and to the Chamber Magistrate to get permission for us to marry," she said.

Campbelltown Hospital staff, famous for prompt responses in times of emergency, swung into action and produced the celebrant and a bridal bouquet for the big day on 12 February 1982.

"I still remember the Matron and Sisters (senior nurses) in their red coats presenting me with a corsage of flowers."

The couple, who now reside in Lismore, said they remained friends with many of the sisters who were present at their wedding.

Following nine months in the hospital, undergoing intensive rehabilitation, Mr Spargo walked out of the hospital with help from a pair of crutches in October 1982.

"Barry has always been a strong man. Teamed up with Peter, his doctor, the end result was Barry is still alive and they saved his legs," Mrs Spargo said.

"He still rings Peter on his anniversary every year to say 'thank you'."