

## Guinness record-holder and Tarzana resident Ron Sarchian can shatter a watermelon in one chop, now fights for his life

A beloved San Fernando Valley stuntman, Sarchian plans to break more Guinness world records



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Stuntman Ron Sarchian set a new Guinness world record by full cicking a bag more than 6,000 times in one hour. He did it by kicking 6,012 the Martial Arts History Museum in Burbank on June 15, 2013. (Photoe Blevins)

Stuntman Ron Sarchian set a new Guinness world record by full contact kicking a bag more than 6,000 times in one hour. He did it by kicking 6,012 times at the Martial Arts History Museum in Burbank on June 15, 2013. (Photo by Gene Blevins)

By **LOU PONSI** |

Ever since thumbing through a frayed copy of the Guinness Book of World Records as young child, Ron Sarchian has been fascinated with the notion of performing an activity faster or for a longer time period than anyone else in the world.

So fascinated in fact, that Sarchian, a professional stuntman, actor, kickboxer and personal trainer, went on to set 34 world records sanctioned by Guinness, which has since changed its name to Guinness World Records

The Tarzana resident's world records include punching a heavy bag for more than 50 hours, throwing 150 roundhouse kicks in one minute, hitting a tractor tire with a sledgehammer 78 times in one minute and splitting 42 watermelons with a karate chop in one minute.

In his years doing stunt work for television and films, Sarchian, 58, has been set on fire, thrown off buildings, crashed cars, been blown up and was a debris dodger — a job that involves running through an explosion while trying to avoid being hit by flying bricks.

But today, Sarchian is involved in a much different type of endeavor, one that doesn't involve punching or kicking or running or even getting has name in a book.



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Fitness professional and stuntman Ron Sarchian holds 32 world records, all documented in the Guinness Book of Records. (Photo by Hans Gutknecht, Los Angeles Daily News/SCNG)



After inexplicably losing weight and turning jaundice, Sarchian underwent tests that revealed a bile duct blockage caused by a tumor the size of a grape.

On Jan. 27 Sarchian was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, a form of cancer with a high mortality rate, the same type of pancreatic cancer that took the lives of Patrick Swayze and Steve Jobs.

While individual outcomes depend on several factors, the five-year survival rate for people with pancreatic cancer is 10 out of 100, according to John Hopkins Medicine.

“It changes your perspective on everything immediately,” Sarchian said. “It’s something I’ll never forget. Until that happens to you, you don’t know how you are going to react. There are so many questions. It is a very personal thing.”

Sarchian was told by his doctors he was in for a battle and would need to endure several rounds of chemotherapy to shrink the tumor and then go under the knife to have the tumor removed.

The initial reaction was shock, followed by bewilderment.

“Why me,” Sarchian said to himself. “What about the guy who smokes three packs of cigarettes a day and is 100 pounds overweight and he is fine.”

The Michigan native also thought about his father, who died when Sarchian was 3-years-old.

“Every day, when you wake up, you don’t know how you are doing to field,” he said. “It changes your sense of urgency about life. If you’re upset with someone or someone is upset with you, get rid of that. It doesn’t mean anything anymore.”

Then, a short time after being diagnosed, Sarchian committed to fighting cancer by tapping into the inner strength he'd drawn on so many times in the past, when in the midst of grueling activity he wanted to quit. Such as the time he was in a state of delirium and on the verge of collapsing after punching a heavy bag for 30 hours with another 20 hours to go.

"If anybody can come back from something like this, it's Ron," said longtime friend Carl Ciarfallo, a respected Hollywood stuntman himself, one of Sarchian's closest friends. "I keep my thoughts positive for him. He is quite an inspiration in the lives of people he comes in contact with."

Just days before the surgery, Sarchian snapped 185 pencils with a karate chop in one minute to set his thirty-fourth world record.

Many of Sarchian's recent years focused on splitting watermelons, pumpkins and a variety of objects with a karate chop, a punch or a sledgehammer.

"What he is accomplishing is amazing," wrote the [late Gene Le Bell, a Judo world champion and stuntman](#), who dubbed Sarchian "The Hammer" because it was his tool of choice in achieving several world records. "He is a trailblazer and trendsetter and someday he will be recognized for his outstanding efforts."

And Sarchian doesn't simply attempt world records for himself.

"Once I came out of anesthesia, the pain was more than I've ever experienced," Sarchian said. "It was next level. And I was on a lot of drugs too. I really wasn't sure if I was going to live or die for about two hours. The mental discipline and toughness is what got me through. The nurses were telling me I was mumbling. I kept saying 'You can get through this. You can get through this.'"

Even two months after surgery, the recovery process remains daunting, Sarchian said.

He's had to return to the hospital for overnight stays more than once due to complications.

Sarchian's most recent trip back to the hospital was Thursday, Oct. 20.

As of Friday, Oct. 21 he was still there and wasn't sure when he'd be able to go back home.

Sarchian is sure about one thing, however. He sees more world records in his future.

"When Ron gets into something, he doesn't just tip-toe," Ciarfallo said. "He jumps in with both feet. Ron has all that testosterone and the humanity to go with it."

For more information on Ron Sarchian and his accomplishments, go to [worldrecordron.com](http://worldrecordron.com).