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TROY DONAHUE: DEATH OF A HEARTTHROB



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PHOTO

Docs fought desperately to save 65-yr-old legend – but his HEART finally gave out

DESPITE a dramatic battle, faded screen idol Troy Donahue died in his hospital bed – after surgeons tried an amazing six bypasses to keep his faltering heart beating.

As doctors fought to save him, the brave star maintained his sense of humor and told hospital staff, "Hey, I used to be somebody."

While cardiologists struggled to pull him through, he even joked with old pal Connie Stevens, who sat at his bedside through the night – asking her for a kiss at one point.

Stevens praised his bravery later, saying, "I watched Troy in a magnificent battle for his life."

"After his sixth bypass, I walked in and he was full of hope and trying his best."

Doctors first tried clot-busting drugs in a bid to open up his clogged arteries after Donahue had a heart attack following a visit to the gym and was rushed to the hospital on Aug. 30.

"They then considered angioplasty, a procedure in which arteries are cleared by a tiny balloon that's pushed through – but it couldn't be done successfully," says an insider.

"So they tried a series of bypasses hoping to keep his heart going."

But Troy's courage and the surgeons' best efforts were just not enough. He died on Sept. 2 at St. John's Hospital and Medical Center in Santa Monica. He was 65.

"We went all through the night with him and he just couldn't hold on any longer," says Stevens, who starred with him in the '60s flick

Parrish and the TV show *Hawaii Eye*.

Ironically, says pals, the handsome former teen heart throb could probably have lived to ripe old age – only he had agreed to heart surgery months ago.

"Troy had been suffering from heart problems for about a year," says one pal.

"But he was ducking the surgery that doctors advised. Even though they told him he needed a bypass, he ignored them."

"Sometimes, he was in agony from angina pain, but he just tried to wait it out and go on."

According to one old pal, he had premonition that if he went into the hospital for the surgery he would never come out.

When he finally passed away, his sister and his fiancée – Chinese opera star Zheng Cao – were at his bedside, praying that he would make it.

"They were devastated," says th



Donahue with his fiancée, opera singer Zheng Cao