

In Memory of My Mother

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My mother, Margot, was my best friend and my greatest role model. I lost her over 20 years ago to ovarian cancer. For 18 months, I watched her struggle to try and defeat this horrible disease. I watched the pain, the false hopes, the humiliation - and I watched as the cancer ate away at her body. My mother's will to live could not save her, and no amount of love or positive thinking could prevent her death.

At that time, I decided that the only way to make sense of this tragedy and the only way to honor my mother's memory was to help support scientific research that would hopefully eradicate this disease. Too many of our mothers are lost to cancer every day and I could not sit back and watch as others suffered in the same way as my mother had. And so I began my journey as a Cancer Advocate.

I hate cancer. I hate it like I've never hated anything in my life. It causes incredible pain and suffering and does not discriminate. It knows no class barriers; it is not conscious of race, religion or gender.

But, like other diseases that once caused fear and suffering, cancer can and will be cured. When I was growing up, we couldn't go to the beach because we were afraid of getting polio. Similar stories can be told about tuberculosis and small pox. Someday soon, in the not too distant future, we will all be sitting around telling similar stories about the "Big C." And that day, it will no longer hold power over us because it will no longer exist.

Nevertheless, each year nearly 1.4 million Americans are diagnosed with cancer, and about 560,000 will die from it - which translates into more than 1,500 individuals every day. These statistics are unbearable, especially when one realizes that cancer research today - if pursued aggressively and with sufficient funding - can do so much more to speed the diagnosis, treatment, prevention and cure of this monstrous disease. Our goal at Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C) is to raise awareness and research funding in order to help end the scourge of this disease once and for all. Working with the American Association for Cancer Research, we are sponsoring "Dream Teams" of scientists and doctors who are collaborating to accelerate the development of promising new drug treatments.

I still miss my mother every day. And I wish more than anything that she were here to see the amazing advancements that are giving so many cancer patients and their loved ones hope. I take comfort in knowing that my mother would be overjoyed by the fact that millions of women and their children are celebrating this Mother's Day with the real promise of a cancer-free future on the horizon.

Today we stand up in memory of all those moms we've lost, and all those moms who are in the fight against this vicious disease. Launch a star in memory of someone you love at su2c.org