

Steel Magnolias

Breast Cancer Support Group, Inc.

Breaking the Chains

November 17, 2014

Gender Specific Diagnosis

There are diseases that are typically seen in either male or female patients. Women are conditioned from an early age to stay up to date with regular exams that are meant to allow an early diagnosis of female related conditions. Men are encouraged to do the same about their gender related conditions, however, it is not typical for a man to seek screening unless he is experiencing symptoms. Such was the case with my dad.

In the mid to late 1970's, Dad was hospitalized by his family doctor for problems with his prostate. This event is funny! It is also very revealing of how sensitive a man can be concerning male reproductive health issues. Mom and I went in the afternoon to visit Dad. Upon entering his room, we could see he was very upset, actually angry. I asked, "What's the matter, Dad?" To which he replied, "Keep that woman out of my room!" "What woman," I asked. "The woman in the room across the hall. She came in here and asked what I was admitted for, and I said, prostate trouble, to which she replied, 'I had that one time.'"

Many people are not aware that men can have breast cancer. Because cases of male breast cancer are rare, when diagnosed, the tendency is to deny the possibility of having what is widely viewed as a woman's disease.

Submitted by Lenora Johnson, Founder



Sharing love through support

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Lenora Johnson, Founder

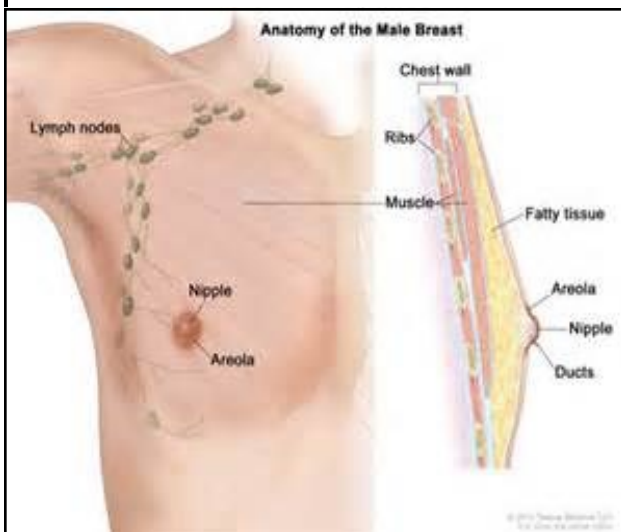
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A Male Breast Cancer Survivor's Story

Derrick Cameron was born in Mount Holly, New Jersey. He has traveled half the world. Living in different cultures around the world, a religious mother, and a drill sergeant father definitely helped mold his personality. In the many things his mother taught him, being humble, mentally strong, and God fearing have taken him far.



Derrick attended the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) where he received Bachelor of Science, Electrical Engineering; Master of Science,

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In Lean Manufacturing, Systems Engineering, and Project Management. Derrick's community outreach is extensive. Reluctant to share all he does, some of his outreach includes leading efforts for educating the youth about Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). He sits on several community outreach and advisory boards. He was the visionary and catalyst for bringing a week long Summer Engineering Camp for Robotics to the Huntsville community – scheduled to serve 500 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students city wide in June 2015.

Just as Derrick was tapping in to a new level of his career and enjoying his life, he was diagnosed with Breast Cancer in January 2010. The idea of a man having Breast Cancer is a mental challenge as much or more than a physical challenge. Although he did not know the kind of battle he would face, he welcomed the challenge nonetheless. Fear can set in and this kind of fear can be great. Mentally a person goes through so many thoughts about their family's genetic code, people's perception, and how those people will treat you. Your short term memory may be affected as well. You feel drained and tired the most when you finish a treatment. You will slowly come out of this state over the next couple of days. You will get tired quickly doing most simple activities. Derrick lost all of his hair over his entire body while his skin got darker with a chalky feel in areas. The darkest areas developed on his fingers, toes, and around his eyes. He had neuropathy in his hands and feet which has not fully departed in his feet after three years later.

There is an emotional rollercoaster ride that coincide with the cancer battle. There were times when you feel alone in the battle and less than a man because of the disease's perception being associated with only women. The chemotherapy will cause the development of what cancer patients call "chemo brain." This is where mood swings, indirect anger and aggression, come unexpectedly. You learn a lot about the relationship you have with a person when they find out you have cancer. You will see the people who really care and show support, and those who don't care and will shy away from you. His unconditional friends did not care nor judge. Those friendships never changed. It is so important for Cancer patients, especially men, to find a support cast.

Derrick said he had friends, family, business professionals, coworkers, and even strangers helping him in his battle. He learned that when your family and seasonal friends are not there, God will replace them swiftly.

As he engaged his fight with breast cancer while trying to maintain his normal life, he was unfortunately in a motorcycle accident that broke his right femur, right forearm, left shoulder, and cracked his hip. Although the accident broke several of Derrick's bones, it did not break his spirit or his drive. Imagine 24 hour a day pain, losing independency, and having many side effects from the chemotherapy treatments. Although recovering from the accident, dealing with constant pain, and experiencing many side effects from the chemotherapy, treatments were difficult. Derrick's greatest obstacle and test was keeping his full faith in God.

Derrick is a 4-year Breast Cancer survivor and has successfully completed chemotherapy and multiple surgeries. He is now charging into new levels of life and his career. Derrick is finally getting back to a higher quality of life where he has resumed his old hobbies such as basketball, flag football, and riding his motorcycle while he pursues his divine appointment to be an advocate for Breast Cancer Awareness and a motivational speaker. Derrick uses his life experiences to encourage Cancer Warriors and Caregivers to transform their way of thinking and raise their expectations on life. Derrick's message to men is for them not to misplace their pride. Educate yourselves and get annual checkups. A real man will take responsibility to take care of himself and not be selfish against those who love him the most. Having Breast Cancer did not make Derrick any less of a man; in fact, it made him a better man.



NOTE: Derrick Cameron was the keynote speaker at Quality of Life's Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Forum and Fundraiser, "Breaking the Chains of Breast Cancer" held on Thursday, October 16, 2014 at the Wayne C. Rowe Auditorium in Gadsden, AL Thank you, Derrick for sharing your important and inspirational story with Steel Magnolias Newsletter.

The Steel Magnolias Breast Cancer support Group met on October 28, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. in the private dining room of RMC. Everyone enjoyed a meal of baked potatoes provided by the RMC cafeteria and side dishes provided by Steel Magnolias.

Following the meal, Vice President Nancy Gillespie introduced Dr. Baird who spoke to us about new treatments for certain types of cancer and new therapies that target cells so that DNA is not damaged. These new treatments come with a high price tag. They could cost as much as \$100,000.00 a year. She stated that the healthcare system will be broke at this rate if something is not done by Congress. She suggested that we contact our Congressmen concerning this problem.

Following Dr. Baird's presentation, President Elaine Johns called the meeting to order.

The Minutes were read and a move was made by Jimmy Taylor to accept them as read and a second was made by Judy Elder. The motion passed.

The financial report was read and a motion was made by Judy Elder to accept the report and a second was made by Jimmy Taylor.

Elaine Johns announced to the group that Ms. Helen Henley was retiring from the Chaplain's office and encouraged everyone to sing a card for her.

Chaplain Sherry Grinstead gave a very inspirational devotion based on Matthew 19:26. "With men things are impossible but with God all things are possible. She spoke about how our lives can sometimes feel broken, but with God's help He can put the pieces of our lives back together. God can make something beautiful out of our lives. Sherry read the names on our prayer list and added those mentioned during the meeting and prayed for them.

No old business.

New Business: Nancy Burnell made a motion to keep the current officers for the coming year. Marilyn Lawson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Jimmy Taylor made a move to pay for a new cart for the office. Marilyn Lawson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Nancy Burnell asked that someone be responsible for the Bake and Jewelry Sale and the Dining Voucher Bazaar. They would be responsible for the setup, take down and lining up people to work. She asks that everyone pray about what they feel led to do in this situation.

Elaine Johns asked if there were any special needs in the group. Marti Warren asked us to remember her this Friday when she has surgery. Elizabeth asked us to pray for them and Becky.

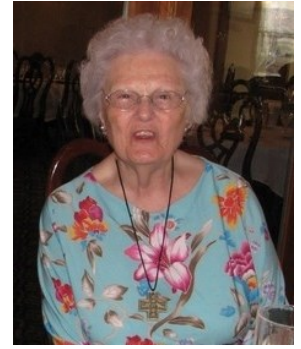
Gladys Denizard thanked everyone, especially Nancy Gillespie for helping her get to the meetings.

A motion was made by Nancy Burnell to adjourn and a second was made by Judy Elder.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:
Margaret Taylor in the absence of secretary Connie Stephens

Honorable Mention



Our honorable mention for November is Helen Henley. Helen retired from the Chaplain's office the first of the month.

Congratulations! From the short time I have known Ms. Helen I have really enjoyed her wit and her straight forward, no nonsense, tell it like is personality! She is my kind of friend. She and my mother had a lot of the same traits and I have a lot of respect for her. I have asked a few members that have worked with Helen to write a few words to honor her.

Elaine Johns

There aren't enough words in the Lexicon to describe what you have meant to Steel Magnolias.

I remember when we were planning our first jewelry show, that you, Helen, invited me into your lovely home and gave me a box jewelry to sell. I remember saying, "Helen, are you sure you want to donate this jewelry?" to which she replied, "I don't need it anymore. I want you to have it."

Helen was with us from the beginning until her recent retirement.. You would see her in the hallways to and from the surgery waiting room to give food vouchers to families with cancer surgeries. Even after her own surgery, off she would go on her walker to help others!

Helen, you have made such an impact on so many lives. You were so positive with that beautiful smile as you greeted everyone in the Chaplain's office.

Helen, enjoy your well deserved rest, but the Chaplain's office nor Steel Magnolias will never be the same!

God bless and keep you!

Marti Warren

Getting to know and getting to work with Helen Henley has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my life. Ms. Helen, has volunteered in the Chaplain's office 7 days a week for over 13 years. She came to work long before others and most times was there long after they left. She has been a good friend to Steel Magnolias and myself. She has always shown kindness and love. If every there was a woman with the virtues of a Godly woman it is Helen Henley. You will be missed by many but a lot by me.

Love you. Nancy Gillespie

I will truly miss not seeing Helen on the days that I volunteer. From our very first meeting I found Helen to be congenial to everyone, insightful in explaining hospital policies and extremely helpful to all that approached her. Helen's kindness was singularly evident in her helpful approach to the assistance to the many that visited the Chaplain's office to secure meal or transportation assistance. Helen will be sorely missed by all.

Barbara Trull

What can I say about Ms. Helen Henley? She is without a doubt the most Godly woman I know, the most generous, the most thoughtful of others and the most dedicated to serving in and through the Chaplain's office where she has touched so many lives for her Lord. She has a special sense of humor that combined with all her other attributes just make you want to love her and I do LOVE Ms. Helen. I will miss our conversations, her wisdom and her special laughter. She is an extraordinary woman that has been blessed by God with many talents. Have you heard her play the piano? Beautiful!!! She not only plays with her fingers, she plays with her heart. I know that God will continue to use her in her new home to touch the lives of those she meets there. Jimmy is looking forward to keeping that date with her, although she said she would let me come along too! WE LOVE YOU MS. HELEN!!

Margaret and Jimmy Taylor

My first day in the Chaplain's office I was sent to Helen's desk to get all the little 'hospital necessities' that volunteers were required to have taken care of. she told me I had to go to the Tyler Center to take a test. I tried to give her the reasons why I needed to do it later and she looked me straight in my eye and said " you need to do it now". I gave no further comment, I did it then. Thus began a 19 month long relationship full of love and respect. She could make me jump to attention and 'do it right now' quicker than my mom. I'm sure I speak for all of us when I say our offices and our hearts will be emptier without her. we love and miss you Helen.

Stephanie Thornton

Tribute to Helen Henley

In the Fall of 2001, when I walked into Chaplain Wilson's office, then located in RMC Professional Plaza, suite 904, and met Helen Henley, I had no idea how magnificent was the woman I met. It was obvious that she was a very disciplined person. Being a retired Lt. Colonel, I'm sure was a contributing factor in her organizational skills.

As I got to know Helen better, I came to know a woman of deep faith. She is a woman with a sense of gratitude to her Lord and a servant's heart. As Assistant Chaplain, Helen would visit patients, in Chaplain Wilson's absence. Over the years, I was one of those patients. The sincerity and warmth of her prayers felt like a healing balm.

Helen will be missed by Steel Magnolias! Her faithfulness to carry care packages (kits as Helen called them) to breast cancer patients and dining vouchers to the families or care takers of a cancer patient admitted for surgery through Same Day Surgery was dependable, day in and day out. Whatever the task, we knew Helen was faithful.

I love Helen Henley and wish her only God's best as she makes the Veteran's Home in Pell City her home. Shortly before leaving RMC, Helen told me, "I told the staff in Pell City, I'm not moving into the Veteran's Home to be waited on, I want a place to serve."

Submitted by Lenora Johnson, Founder-Steel Magnolias Breast Cancer Support Group, Inc.

Presidents Corner

Thanksgiving is only a few days away and I know most of us have plenty to be thankful for. It is the time of year that everyone is so busy getting things ready for their Thanksgiving meal and then all the shopping for Christmas. I hope everyone has time to get everything done and to slow down just enough to enjoy the season.

I still want to encourage everyone to write their story. You never know, your story may help someone that needs encouragement. Please, anyone that wants to share their story send it to elaine@steelmagnoliasinc.org.

There is still a need for help in the office at the Physician's Center. If you feel you have a day or a half day contact Nancy at nancy@steelmagnoliasinc.org or call Margaret Taylor or Nancy at the office 256-231-8827. Margaret works Thursday and Nancy works Friday.

Please RSVP Nancy Burnell when you receive your invitation to the Christmas Breakfast @ Classic on Noble. The date is December the 6th and the time is 10 am. Everyone that attends needs to bring a \$10 gift card to your favorite eating place.

We are starting to work on the 2015 Lea Fite Golf Tournament. If you would like to help contact Jimmy Taylor at 256-463-4313.

We need for someone to take charge of the Bake and Jewelry Sale at the mall the Saturday before Easter. We have all the contact information and all you have to do is make the arrangements and schedule members to cover the event. We need someone to do the same with the Dining Voucher Bazaar at RMC.

We are open to new ideas to help make the Steel Magnolias more visible in the community. We have had a wonderful year in 2014 and thanks to everyone that supported all the events we participated in.

If you are reading this for the first time and would like to come to the monthly meetings, come on! We meet the 4th Tuesday of every month in the private dining room at RMC. If you are not sure of where that is just give us a call at the office after 11 am. 256-231-8827.

God has blessed the Steel Magnolias. Please pray for all the people we touch and thank the Lord for all that he has done for us and through us.

May God bless you all!

Final October Events

October 24th Kristi Jennings and the Alexandria Cheerleaders raised money again for the Steel Magnolias. Tonya Curvin represented the Steel Magnolias and was presented with \$385 that was collected that night. Tonya is a breast cancer survivor and her handsome son plays for the Valley Cubs! Thank you Kristi Jennings and all the Alexandria Cheerleaders for supporting us!

Submitted by Elaine Johns



October 25th members of the Steel Magnolias were at Brighton Collectibles at the Summit. Lanae Brooks and all the ladies helped to spread the word about the Steel Magnolias and all the services we offer to breast cancer patients. The new "Power of Pink" bracelet, earrings and necklace were absolutely beautiful. If anyone is interested just give them a call @ 205-972-4662 or contact me at elaine@steelmagnoliasinc.org.

Thanks for all the support Brighton Collectibles!

Submitted by Elaine Johns



October 27th Nancy Gillespie and Margaret Taylor presented the school Girl program to 240 girls at the Calhoun County Career Technical School in Jacksonville. We were there from 7:45 in the morning until 3pm and had a great time. Krista Young coordinated this program. She and the other teachers were all decked out in pink tutus and the room we occupied was decorated in pink. Flowers and streamers were everywhere. We had a great time and made some new friends. We also will have great volunteer help for our future events.

Submitted by Margaret Taylor

Up Coming Events

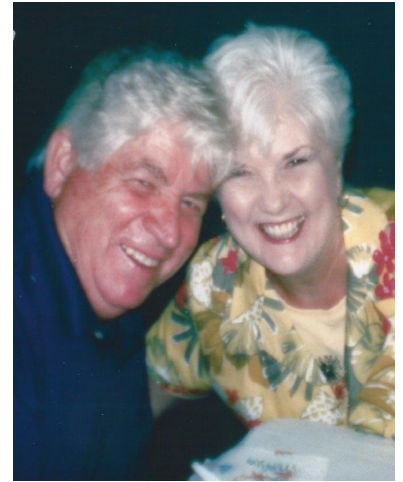
November 25th will be our next meeting in the private dining room at RMC at 5pm. We will be having meat loaf and creamed potatoes. Steel Magnolias please bring side dishes and deserts.

December 6th we are having our Christmas Breakfast at 10 am at Classic on Noble. Everyone attending please bring a \$10 gift card from your favorite place to eat. We plan on coming to have a good time and come hungry! There is no cost to persons invited and one guest. For family and friends invited it will be \$11 each. Invitations are in the mail.

December 15th is our next newsletter mailing day.

Survivor's Story

In January of 2005 I was planning what Jimmy and I would do when I retired at the end of the year. I had always been healthy and never thought I would have any serious problem so when after my yearly exam I received a letter saying that I needed to have a second mammogram. I was not too concerned. After the second letter and a phone call from my doctor to schedule an appointment with a surgeon I became a little concerned. My mother had breast cancer in 1976 and died from leukemia in 1982 as a result of chemotherapy and my oldest sister had breast cancer when she was in her late 40's. I also have two other sisters that has pre-cancerous cells in their breasts and decided to have preventative surgery to remove breast tissue. I thought that after every female in my family had their breast removed that I was home free. Surely it would not happen to me, but it did.



Following biopsies my surgeon told me there were two types of cancer in my left breast and of course recommended a mastectomy. While I was home recuperating I received a care package from Steel Magnolias. I also received cards and phone calls that were so encouraging to me during my recovery. My sweet husband and daughter were my best encouragers. They changed dressings, cleaned house and made sure I ate well. I also have a fabulous sister that was always ready to do whatever was needed. We all have our moments, but for the most part I knew that my Lord was taking care of me and I wanted to be a positive influence to my family. God has been so good to me and provided an organization where I can touch the lives of those that are hurting.

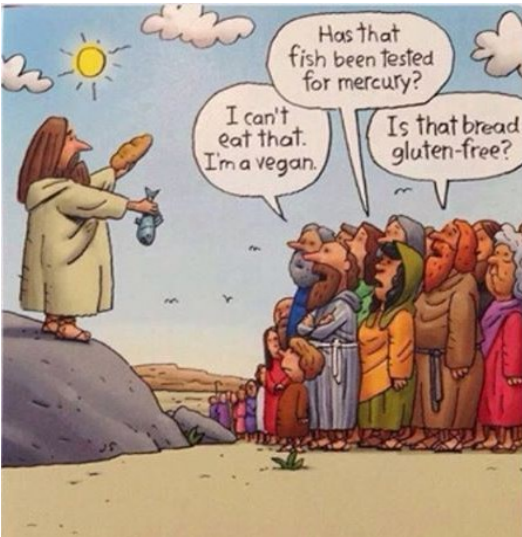
It has been nearly 10 years since my diagnosis and I can truly say that I thank God for breast cancer. That sounds crazy I know but without breast cancer I would never have met all the wonderful people that make up Steel Magnolias. Thank you Lenora for your vision of a support group and what this organization has meant to me and so many others. I love you all!

Margaret Taylor

Joggin' Inside

Big Mosquitoes: When my grandson Billy and I entered our vacation cabin we kept the lights off until we were inside to keep from attracting pesky insects. Still, a few fireflies followed us in. Noticing them before I did, Billy whispered, "it's no use, Grandpa, the mosquitoes are coming after us with flashlights."

Submitted by Judy Elder, Anniston AL



"We're looking for someone with the wisdom of a 50-year-old, the experience of a 40-year-old, the drive of a 30-year-old and the pay scale of a 20-year-old."



19th/20th Century Influences

by Donna Houston

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ORR
RYRIE
SANKEY

SCHAEFFER
SIMPSON
SPURGEON
SUNDAY
SWAIN
TAYLOR
TENBOOM
TRUTH
WILLARD

Happy Thanksgiving