

## EDWARDS STAYS

## Praising her persistence



LIFE  
WITH CANCER  
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There was something both agonizing and moving about watching Elizabeth Edwards yesterday in front of the television cameras, announcing to the world, with a slightly pinched face yet strong smile, that her cancer had returned. And that her husband John will continue his run for president.

I watched as the 57-year-old mother stood by her husband, allowing the media into the very personal world of human frailty. I watched as she stood almost unflinchingly and vowed to keep on.

Cancer patients and their families know probably better than anyone about the importance of soldiering on. We do it quietly every day, not by running for the nation's highest office, but by raising kids, going to work, walking the dog, or even putting away the clean laundry that's been sitting folded in the basket for weeks.

So John Edwards' announcement to continue with his Democratic political ambitions isn't that surprising, despite the news that his wife's breast cancer has spread to her bones and possibly her lungs — pushing the family back into that netherworld of cancer uncertainty. "We're not going to cower in a corner," John Edwards said staunchly. Hiding it isn't an option either, though people sometimes mystifyingly talk about the so-called dignity of silently battling the disease. I've never understood that. Are we supposed to be ashamed for some reason?

Most likely she was still reeling from Monday's news, the way such words play over and over, like a CD with a scratch on it.

Is it wise for him to stay in the race, already behind Obama and Hillary, as his wife faces potentially more grueling treatment? I'll leave that to the political analysts and to the

## SURVIVORS AND THEIR FAMILIES



PHOTO BY PATRICK OEHLEK

John Pace, 72, husband of breast cancer survivor Lorraine Pace, 65, of West Islip, who founded the non-profit Breast Cancer Help incorporated and the Breast Cancer Mapping Project.

"You can't stop living. Hopefully she'll get better. We did OK. I think Mr. Edwards is right to keep going. You gotta fight it and I'm sure he's going to be right with her. I don't think he should stop doing what he's doing and I don't think his wife would want him to."

Estrea Janoson, 54, Searingtown, nine-year lung cancer survivor.

"My husband and I were trying to have a baby before I was diagnosed with lung cancer in 1998 at the age of 45. We stopped and said wait a second. What if I should die? I'm going to leave my child motherless, my husband a widower. So for a year, we didn't do anything. And I learned a lot more. I learned the concept of going on with your life. Even though my oncologist said, 'You're not out of the woods.'"

"Unless someone has told you unequivocally, and the only person who can do that is God, that you are going to die, that's the only time someone stops and lives their lives differently. So for a spouse to not go on with their lives the way they planned it doesn't make any sense. You really never know and cancer patients have to feel that whatever they're telling you, statistics don't matter."

Lorraine Pace, 65, of West Islip, two-time breast cancer survivor. Her most recent recurrence was in December, detected by the very digital mammography machine she and her husband donated to Stony Brook University Medical Center.

"When I was diagnosed, I worked every day. Sometimes that helps you get better and get your mind on something else," she said.



NEWSDAY PHOTO / KEN SAWCHUK



NEWSDAY PHOTO / ROBERT MECCA

Alice Soler of Malverne, 57, breast cancer survivor and retired physical education and health teacher for more than 30 years who volunteers at the Adelphi University Breast Cancer Hotline.

"The chance of having a recurrence is something that is in the back of every cancer survivor's mind. So continuing with the race is a great idea because it's sometimes helpful to be distracted. Your mental state is helpful in the healing process. If you're soldiering on, you believe you are going to survive."

## NOWONLINE

Watch a video of a Long Island cancer survivor recounting her struggle with lung cancer while raising a family at [newsday.com/li](http://newsday.com/li)

couple to decide. But I give her a lot of credit. She's been through it before. And I'm not just talking about the disease.

Fighting cancer is much like a hard-fought presidential race. In

fact, it's probably more difficult. You take it state by state, or step by step. If you can make it past Iowa and New Hampshire, or past the drugs that make you vomit and the radiation that

sears and discolors your skin, you might have the chance to take it further. You might have a chance at victory.

Look at Betty Ford. Less than two months into her husband's presidency, she discovered she had breast cancer and went public with details about her mastectomy. It was 1974, a time when no women, no men either really, talked much about their cancer. Her candor boosted her popularity.

"I think life has to go on," said Estrea Janoson of Searingtown, who knows all too well about candor and not letting the disease take over your life.

Diagnosed with lung cancer nine years ago in the midst of trying to have a baby, Janoson

fought her cancer successfully and then against her doctor's recommendation, underwent in vitro fertilization and is now the mother of 5-year-old twins, a boy and a girl. Her daughter Lara has a form of autism, but Janoson spends much of her time shuttling her kids to and from their own appointments. She's also co-founder of the Lung Cancer Alliance's online survivor community.

For the Edwards family, the public scrutiny will probably be the hardest thing to overcome, cameras rolling and flashbulbs flashing. But I admire Elizabeth Edwards for staying on the campaign bus. Hopefully, she, not cancer, will be the one driving.

## Their public and private campaigns

EDWARDS from A5

barked on a two-day fundraising swing to New York and California that will culminate in Edwards' appearance at a health care forum with Clinton and Obama in Las Vegas tomorrow.

Elizabeth Edwards, 57, was diagnosed with invasive ductal breast cancer soon after her husband and his running mate,

John Kerry, lost the November 2004 election. She had surgery and underwent several months of radiation and chemotherapy.

Her physician, Dr. Lisa Carey, told reporters yesterday that the cancer had spread to bone and tissue on the right side. "In addition to the bone it's also possible it's involving the lung," Carey said.

The couple are no strangers

to tragedy: In 1996, their son, Wade, 16, was killed in a car accident. They also have an adult daughter, an 8-year-old daughter and a 6-year-old son.

Asked yesterday how heartbreak has shaped her husband, Elizabeth Edwards replied, "If you're not able in a focused, thoughtful way to deal with this kind of pressure, you're not ready to be president."