

Survivor Spotlight



Kathryn in her own words...

I do not talk about being a cancer survivor. For years I could not talk about it. I told my doctor I felt like I was standing with my back against a filing cabinet and the drawers were pushing out and I was trying as hard as I could to hold them back. In 1996, I had ectopic thyroid cancer. That means it was outside my thyroid in a duct near the base of my throat. At the time someone near to me said they had read that most people who had cancer had it as a result of their own actions.

That really hurt. As a child I lived near the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Nuclear Plant. Even though mine didn't, the parent of nearly every kid in town worked at the Nuclear Plant. We didn't think very much about it at the time. Now when the statement is said that 65 percent of cancer is preventable I think about all the cancer causing agents in the environment around us.

It has been 12 years since the surgery and radioactive iodine treatment cured my cancer. I have a 1948 copy of the first Complete Cancer Chart prepared by Good Housekeeping and approved by the American Medical Association and the American Cancer Society. I looked up thyroid cancer. Under chances for cure, it said "Only fair, on record. New radioactive iodine, apparently very useful, may make great difference. Not yet evaluated." I read that Dr. Judah Folkman, a groundbreaking cancer researcher whose work cured the disease in mice and gave hope for a cure in humans, has died. He was 74. Once I heard another researcher say that Judah was going to cure cancer. What a marvelous world of researchers we live among. For Judah and all the rest of you, I give my thanks.