

Our Stories of Survival



Marinda Mitchell

Special to the MDR
Submitted by Exie Mitchell

My mother, Marinda Mitchell, was diagnosed with breast cancer in August 2023. In December of that same year, she underwent surgery to remove the cancer. Since then, she has endured radiation and continues treatment

to this day.

But if you know my mother, you know that being a warrior is nothing new for her. She has been a warrior in every sense of the word for as long as I can remember. She has faced many battles throughout her life, and each time, she has met them with resilience, strength, and a de-

termination that I have always admired.

Her ongoing battle with breast cancer is simply another chapter in a life that has already shown me what strength looks like.

And through it all, she continues to fight. She continues to show up. She continues to love, laugh, nurture, and be

the wonderful mother and grandmother she has always been.

I am incredibly proud to call her my mother. Her strength has taught me more than she will probably ever realize.

My mother is a warrior. She always has been, and she always will be.

Jennifer Draper

I was first diagnosed at 29. I had a lumpectomy and did a lot of radiation and chemotherapy. My daughters were 8 and 5 at the time.

In 2013, I was diagnosed with inflammatory breast cancer on the opposite side, Stage 2.

I did lots of radiation and chemotherapy.

I had a double mastectomy.

In 2016, I was diagnosed

with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma, stage 4. They were able to clear it up with chemo.

During all that time, my husband has been mom and dad, taking on all the duties. We will be married 35 years in November.

My cancer was hormone fed. I take a treatment every three weeks to keep it at bay. I am going to take the treatment until it stops working.

I prayed to God to let me be here to raise my girls, and now I have two son-in-laws and three grandkids. I am truly blessed beyond measure!

One of my daughters is Allison Strother, who works the window at Brick City Wellness.

I'm 53 now and fighting strong!



Allison Strother on her mother's fight:

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and I couldn't let it pass without recognizing the strongest woman I know—my mom. For 24 years, she has fought a battle that most people couldn't begin to imagine. She's endured a double mastectomy, hundreds of chemotherapy treatments, and more difficult days than anyone will ever know. Yet through it all, she never complains, never asks for sympathy, and continues to face each day

with a strength and grace that amazes me. I've watched her fight battles that would bring most people to their knees, and she still manages to keep going. She is the definition of courage, resilience, and determination. If I can be even half the woman she is, I'll consider myself blessed. Breast cancer may be part of her story, but it will never define who she is. I'm so proud to call her my mom, and I thank God every day for her.



Carolyn Morris

Special to the MDR
Submitted by Exie Mitchell

My Aunt Carolyn Morris was diagnosed with breast cancer in March 2017. She was told that her cancer was aggressive and that immediate intervention was necessary. She was quickly scheduled for surgery and advised

to undergo a double mastectomy to help prevent the cancer from spreading to her other breast.

Since her surgery, her cancer has remained in remission. For the past 9½ years, she has continued taking her chemotherapy medication, and in March 2027, she will officially complete her 10-

year journey of chemo medication.

But Aunt Carolyn's story is about so much more than cancer.

Although she never had children of her own, she has been a mother to so many, including me. Through her own battle, she never stopped showing up for other people.

She has continued to love, encourage, serve, support, and pour into others in countless ways.

She has faced this journey with a strength and resilience that I have always admired. She is, without a doubt, one of the greatest fighters I know.

Cheryl Weaver Bryant

Special to the MDR
Submitted by Exie Mitchell

Cheryl Weaver Bryant is a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and one of the strongest women I know. She is the proud mother of three children—one daughter and two sons—and grandmother to eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She also has one son-in-law, two daughters-in-law, and one grandson-in-law who are blessed to call her family.

Cheryl dedicated 37 years of service to the Hot Spring County Clerk's Office. In

June 2012, her life changed when she was diagnosed with breast cancer.

She was devastated by the news, but she refused to let it steal her spirit. Cheryl underwent six rounds of chemotherapy followed by 36–38 rounds of radiation treatments, Monday through Friday. She never missed a treatment and only missed one day of work throughout her entire treatment journey.

During one of her final treatments, Cheryl completely broke down. She was exhausted and ready for it to be over. The nurses encouraged

her, reminding her that she was almost finished and that she was going to win this fight.

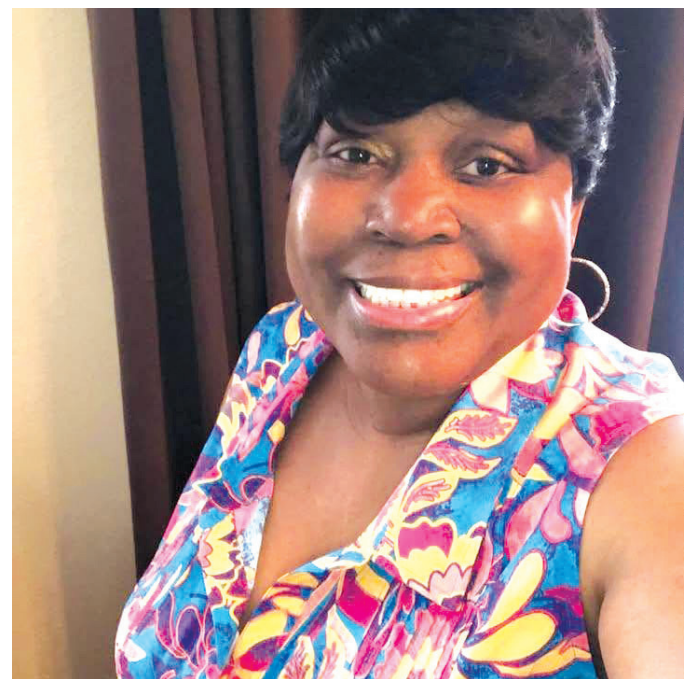
And she did. On January 8, 2013, Cheryl received the news that her cancer was in remission. She has remained in remission ever since.

Today, Cheryl continues to encourage others to take care of themselves, stay positive, and be proactive about their health. Her journey is a reminder that strength doesn't mean you never have a difficult moment. Sometimes strength is allowing yourself

to break down, accepting encouragement, and finding the strength to keep going.

And if you know Cheryl, you already know there is one more thing she will NEVER stop doing—supporting her Malvern Leopards! No matter how she's feeling, she is going to proudly put on that orange and black and cheer for her team.

A breast cancer survivor, a devoted mother and grandmother, a dedicated public servant, and a diehard Leopard fan—Cheryl Weaver Bryant is truly a fighter worth celebrating.



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Prosecuting Attorney

Teresa Howell

215 East Highland Malvern, AR 72104 • 501-337-1468





Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Malvern Housing Authority

100 Gloster Street • Malvern, Arkansas 72104
Ph: 501-332-3652 • Fax: 501-332-3653
E-mail: ed@malvernha.org

