

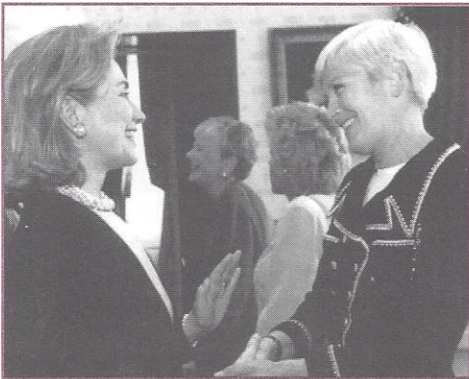
HOPE

News from The Ovarian Cancer Research Fund, Inc.

Winter 1999

An Interview with Liz

As President of The Ovarian Cancer Research Fund (OCRF) and Editor-in-Chief of Harper's BAZAAR, Liz Tilberis has become a spokesperson and advocate for ovarian cancer research and education. Through her public battle with the disease and her book, *No Time To Die*, Liz has managed to bring ovarian cancer into the public eye as well as offer hope to those who suffer from the disease. In a one-on-one conversation with OCRF board member Robin Zarel, Liz shares some of her experiences as a survivor.



Women's health advocate and OCRF supporter Hillary Clinton and Liz Tilberis

Robin Zarel: How did you first discover that you had ovarian cancer?

Liz Tilberis: It was Thanksgiving 1993, and I was not feeling well at all. I was not my usual self and something told me that I needed to see my OB/GYN. I did, and almost immediately, she put several things from my medical history together

and diagnosed me with ovarian cancer.

RZ: Do you remember what your first thoughts and feelings were when you got your diagnosis?

LT: At first I was in shock and complete denial. I left the doctor's office and went to work. It didn't sink in for a while. Once it did, I relied so much on the strength of my husband and kids, and my staff, who have always been so supportive. It also helped me to have a very busy job to keep my mind on other things.

RZ: And yet, because of your job, you are in many ways a public person, and you have the ability to raise awareness about ovarian cancer and the need for research. How did you make the decision to "go public"?

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OCRF medical news

From The March in Washington to breakthroughs in cancer research and treatment, the war on cancer

has gained tremendous momentum across the country. Ovarian cancer in particular has received more attention from the media and the medical community than ever before, thanks to the tireless work of advocates and survivors. For those of us devoted to finding a cure for this disease, the time to act boldly to advance ovarian cancer research is NOW.

To spur the development and discovery of effective methods of screening, early detection, and treatment therapies, The Ovarian Cancer Research Fund's Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) has awarded six two-year grants to exceptional researchers across the country, with particular emphasis on promoting promising young investigators whose innovative pilot projects need support. Chaired by Dr. Carmel Cohen of The Mount Sinai Medical Center, the SAC counts among its members several of the nation's leading specialists in ovarian cancer research and therapy.

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with Liz, cont.

LT: I would have never imagined myself such a public figure until a while after being diagnosed with cancer. In the very first year after my surgery, during chemotherapy, I realized that there was very little information available to women who were going through the same thing.

I was encouraged by my staff to publish two articles in *Bazaar* about my struggle with cancer. The response from readers and cancer patients was so overwhelmingly positive that the idea of a book seemed like the next logical step.

First and foremost, I wanted to write a book about cancer that would help women...

I think it has done that. It is a candid look at the horrors of the disease, but it also weaves humor throughout to balance the difficult parts.

RZ: It must have been very difficult for you to tell your family that you have ovarian cancer. How did you go about telling your husband and your two young sons? Do you have any advice for mothers of young children—what to say, or how much information to share?

LT: I was with my husband when I was diagnosed, so telling him was not an issue. I think parents have to be really honest with their kids. Kids don't miss anything. So it's best to be open with them. Let them ask questions and express their emotions, fears, concerns, and other feelings they might be experiencing.

RZ: I imagine that your positive attitude helps alleviate some of your family's concerns.

Even though you have had a few recurrences, you still have such a hopeful outlook. How do you do it?

LT: I try to keep my sense of humor, and I try to stay focused on the positive things in my life: my kids, my husband, my job. I love what I do, and it helps me to have a magazine to worry about. I don't have to worry about cancer. My doctors do. I think that if I let myself worry, I will be letting cancer have the edge, and I can't afford to do that.

RZ: What message would you like to give the other women out there who have a hard time staying positive and hopeful?

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with Liz, cont.

LT: I think it's about finding an endeavor that makes you feel like you're doing something positive with your life. Find a place to channel the energy that would otherwise be spent on worry and fear. It sounds like a cliché, but humor, laughter, being with friends and taking stock of your priorities, all those things really help.

RZ: As President of OCRF, what are some of your top priorities or wishes for the organization this year?

LT: I would of course like to see a cure for ovarian cancer. But this year, a method for early detection is my priority. That's my biggest concern. Women need a test that will serve them just as a mammogram does for breast cancer. Of course, a government health warning about the possible risks of fertility drugs is also at the top of my list.