

# THE VOICE-TRIBUNE

*Community news with a difference.*

## OVARIAN AWARENESS OF KENTUCKY CELEBRATES LIFE

By Shari Baughman, Social Columnist

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Ovarian Awareness of Kentucky (OAK) held its fifth annual Toast to Life Gynecological Cancer Survivor Dinner on Aug. 24 at The Olmsted.

The evening, centered around the theme “Island of Hope,” was a celebration of life for ovarian cancer survivors and their families.

The mighty Oak tree is a fitting symbol for this organization, which helps women cope on an everyday basis with the ravages that this aggressive disease takes not only on their bodies, but their spirits and the spirits of their family and friends.

It was inspiring to me to speak with some of the women in the crowd of more than 300 who attended.

“When I first committed to coming to a meeting, it was scary. I didn’t want to know anything,” said Dee Edwards, a three year survivor. “But I found myself appreciating the information and support. The women I have met at OAK understand what I’m going through. We find at least one thing to laugh about at every meeting. We also keep each other up to date on new treatments and how to cope with the awful side effects.”

Stephanie Wetzstein, a wife and mother, was diagnosed at age 21. Now 25, she has gone through a tremendous amount of treatment from radiation to chemotherapy to stem cell cleansing.

“I am amazed at the spirit of the women at OAK who have been going through the same ordeal as me, only for much longer,” she said. “I look at them and it keeps me going. If they can do it, so can I.”

The evening's emcees, Rachel Platt and Melissa Swann from WHAS-TV, entertained the crowd with their charming banter during the night of cocktails, dinner and dancing.

Ovarian Cancer is known as “the silent killer” because the symptoms are elusive and there is simply no test for the disease. It's common for patients to go undiagnosed for a year or more before the disease is detected. Some of the more prominent symptoms include severe bloating, chronic pelvic and abdominal pain, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly and urinary symptoms (urgency or frequency) – all of which could be accompanied by fatigue, indigestion, back pain, constipation or menstrual irregularities.

For more information on the disease or its treatment, visit [ovarianawarenessofky.org](http://ovarianawarenessofky.org).



Photo by: Shari Baughman

Curtis and Stephanie Wetzstein, a four-year survivor.



Photo by: Shari Baughman

SuzAnne Caraway, OAK executive board member, with her parents, Richard and DiAnne Estes. DiAnne is a seven-year cancer survivor and celebrated five years treatment-free at the event.



Photo by: Shari Baughman

Melissa Swan, pianist and singer Jeff Rehnet and Rachel Platt entertained guests.



Photo by: Shari Baughman

Therese Crumer, Phil Stuecker, Paulette Briet, Joy Steucker, Bill Carrico, Jack and Janis Lockard and Rick Briet attended the event as a tribute to Cathy Carrico, co-founder of the event who passed aw



Photo by: Shari Baughman

Dee Edwards, a three-year cancer survivor and her mother, Maureen Morrison from Massachusetts.



Photo by: Shari Baughman

**Lucas Caraway, 9, the grandson of DiAnne Estes, a cancer survivor.**



Photo by: Shari Baughman

**Glenda Sharp, diagnosed this year with ovarian cancer, and her daughter, Tanya Martin.**



Photo by: Shari Baughman

**Dr. Sharon E. Moore of U of L's Kent School of Social Work attended the event with friend and cancer survivor, Dr. Veronica Hinton-Hudson of U of L's College of Business.**



Photo by: Shari Baughman

Arne and Jill Doimer. Jill founded OAK with her mother, Judy Morris, who died from ovarian cancer in 2002.