

Cancer Survivor Brunch Speech – Chad Landry

Good Morning. I am sure most of you here today can remember the day your doctor told you, “You are done with all of your cancer treatments. You are now a cancer survivor!” For me, it was on May 26, 1996, after 6 months of chemotherapy and 2 months of radiation, I was finally down to my last radiation treatment. Just one radiation treatment away before I moved from “hopeless” cancer patient to the proud and exclusive cancer survivors’ club. So needless to say I was pretty excited....soo excited that I repeatedly told all of my friends and family the entire week leading up to my last treatment that, “My cancer is on the ropes and it’s time for the knock-out punch!!” To illustrate my point that morning, I dressed up like Rocky Balboa.....YES, that’s right, with white umbro shorts, boxing gloves, red Italian stallion robe, tennis shoes, and sunglasses, I came marching into East Jefferson’s Yenni Cancer Pavillon like it was Madison Square Garden on fight night. To ensure that everyone got the message, I had my mom escort me into the building holding a boom box that blared “Eye of the Tiger.” And I even overheard one elderly cancer patient ask my Doctor if he can switch to the same radiation that “Rocky” has been getting. Those were all great memories but the #1 thing that sticks out from that day was when my Doctor shook my hand, looked me in the eyes, and said: “Congratulations, Chad. You are a survivor. You overcame the odds. You are unstoppable.”

So I returned to LSU, graduated with a finance degree, and was recruited and hired by a little energy company in Houston (that you might have heard of) called Enron. I worked @ Enron for 3 years as a financial analyst. Well if you know anything about Enron you probably know that it was one of the most fraudulent companies in the world. You also probably know that it was one of the largest corporate bankruptcies in our country’s history. Thankfully for me as a financial analyst, I was low man on the totem pole but more important than that, I was a cancer survivor who had been through rough times before. After Enron went bankrupt and I lost my job, I remember telling myself the same thing my Doctor had told me after my last treatment, “You are a survivor. You can overcome the odds. You are unstoppable.”

After I lost my job, I moved from Houston back to New Orleans and got hired by a local firm here as an institutional stock broker. Funny how things work out because at this point I was due for my 5-year annual cancer screening. My East Jefferson radiation oncologist (Dr. Heyman) sent me for a pet scan x-ray and this x-ray lit up 2 lymph nodes in my chin. Dr. Heyman told me that there was a 50/50 chance that my cancer had come back but that the only way to know for sure was to biopsy the node. I told all of my friends and family that if this biopsy came back a “false positive” that I was going to throw the biggest 70’s party you could possibly imagine. We got the results back the next day and I am happy to say it was a false scare—No Cancer! Thus the birth of the 1st Annual Lympho-Maniac 70s party. The Lympho Party is not just an annual cancer fundraiser. To my friends and family who have been involved with this event since the beginning, it is a lot more than that. It is our attempt to take the cancer survivor mindset mainstream. In other words, regardless of whether you have had cancer or not, we are all survivors the night of the lympho party, we have all overcome the odds that night , and

we are all unstoppable that night. And I can tell you when you have 750 people (mostly New Orleanians) thinking that way it sure makes for one hell of a good party.

I regularly get asked the question “How did you come up with the name Lympho-Maniacs?” I can’t actually remember how we came up with the name but I do remember the 1st “Lympho-Maniac” that I ever met. His name was Red and he was a 40 year old good ole boy from Pascagoula, Mississippi. I ran into Red the first time in the waiting room of Dr. Black’s chemotherapy offices here @ EJ. I was nervous while sitting in the waiting room because it was my 1st day of chemotherapy treatment. In contrast, Red was smiling “ear to ear” because it was his last day of chemotherapy. Red was soo excited and all he kept saying was, “ I can’t wait to get home to my family. I can’t wait to drive my UPS truck, I can’t wait to do some fishing on my boat.” Fast forward to about 6 months later, it was now my last day of chemotherapy treatment and coincidentally, I ran into Red again in the waiting room. I asked, “What are you doing here, Red?” Red told me, “a recent x-ray showed some small cancer spots on my liver.” My response, “I am so sorry, Red.” He told me “Don’t be, Chad. Because for the past 6 months, I got to be with my family, I got to drive my UPS truck, and I got to take my boat out and catch a whole lot of fish.”

I learned 3 months later that Red had passed away. Red was a true cancer survivor and the 1st lympho maniac that I ever met. So today I would like to ask everyone to please join hands and in Red’s honor and in honor of all of the other Lympho-Maniacs that we may have lost throughout the years, please say after me “We are survivors, We can overcome the odds, We are unstoppable.” Thank you soo much. Chad Landry