

Karen's story



My Life – My Journey

By Karen Michelle Lester

I discovered the lump in July 2013 during a shower while in Washington, D.C., on what should have been a fun-filled trip with my Sorors. At the time, my doctor had been treating me for fibrocystic disease for about seven months. There was no lump—just some pain, swelling, and fatigue. There was no discharge. I never imagined it could be cancer.

After my return, I underwent a mammogram and two biopsies, both initially inconclusive. Then, on August 7, 2013, I received the diagnosis: Infiltrating Ductal Carcinoma, Stage 3B. Breast cancer. The words hit me hard. Everything felt like it moved in slow motion after that.

My doctor and I agreed on a lumpectomy. On August 22, 2013, I had my first surgery to remove the lump and nine lymph nodes—thankfully, all tested negative. Just one week later, I was told I needed a second surgery. The fear of more cancer was overwhelming. But that second surgery confirmed what I'd been praying for: **no evidence of disease remained.**

Chemo and radiation were grueling, but I found my strength in the unwavering support of my family and friends. I remember being asked, “What made you fight for your life?” I paused for a moment and said,
“GOD has not given me the authority to give up.”

I am a daughter.
I am a mother.
I am a grandmother.
I am a sister.
I am an aunt.

So many people think breast cancer is a death sentence. And yes, sadly, for some it is. But for me, breast cancer 🌸 gave me a new perspective on life. It made me stop taking things for granted. It made me stronger.

Now, more than Twelve years later, I stand here not just as a survivor—but as a **phenomenal woman.**

This is my life.
This is my journey.
And I thank God for every step.