

Dear Family and Friends:

As most of you know, I have been fighting cancer since February 2006. I must say that at times the experience created as many different emotions in me as the chemotherapy has created side effects. But my mother and father taught me to recognize and appreciate the good in people and the world around me, and that is what I have held onto.

Because of this, I recognize how fortunate I am to have a spouse of over 30 years who is the hardest working woman I know and who has sacrificed tirelessly for me and to have two sons who have grown up to be the finest young men I have ever known, as well as other caring and devoted family and friends. I have been given a part of the history and beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains as well as many other gifts by a generous step-father who I could not love more if he were my natural father. I have a business partner who has unselfishly and silently sacrificed for me over these last several years the way no one else I can imagine would. I am fortunate enough to have had a business doing what I enjoy, and the opportunity to participate in running a business with high ethics and standards instead of just chasing the money. When I was physically able, I had the opportunity to sail many times on the Chesapeake Bay, one of the most beautiful and fascinating bodies of water I have ever seen. One could spend a lifetime exploring the bay. I live in a state that has so much natural beauty and history that it is often breathtaking to behold. Every day I walk the same ground as giants like Washington, Mason, Jefferson, and Madison. Arlington Cemetery and other hallowed ground where brave men fought, died, and are laid to rest abound in my home state, the birthplace of American freedom.

I am so lucky to live in a country that believes freedom is a birthright from God and provides tremendous opportunity for those who wish to pursue their dreams and are willing to work hard for them. I live in an age in which I can see close-up pictures of far away planets, an age in which man has walked on the moon and explored space. I live in an age in which global communication and the world's accumulation of history and knowledge is at one's fingertips, an age in which I can instantly access the great art, music, and literature of the world. I live in an age in which medical advances have allowed me to fight and live with this disease much easier than people did only 10 years ago.

Since I have been sick, I have had a novena said for me by Mother Teresa's order in India, a special prayer said for me at the Shrine to Saint Ann's in Canada, a prayer said for me at Lourdes, lambs sacrificed to Allah in my name (with the meat going to the poor), and prayers said for me at Catholic Mass, Synagogue, and Sunday Services in Baptist, Episcopal, Methodist, Lutheran and non-denominational churches, not to mention the special prayers and tremendous support and sacrifice of my family and friends. How could any one man be so fortunate?

And finally I found God or He found me. Actually, He was here all along. I was just too arrogant to seek him. His love for me has saved me. He let me live my selfish little life

without thinking of him too often, but when I needed Him most He was there and so was my faith. I go to Him now thankful for all He has given me and for what is to come.

We all have crosses to bear as we go through life and for most of the people of the world and even for many of you here the burden is great, far greater than mine. The cross I bear is nothing more than the one we all bear at some point, but once again I am fortunate because I know it's coming and I have the time and ability to reflect, make amends, and tell people how much they have meant to me. A lot of people don't get to do that and I want you all to know that because of your support I fought this disease, not from a position of weakness and desperation, but from a position of strength and confidence. And I am grateful to God, my family, my friends, and my country for giving me such a wonderful life.

Kindest Regard to everyone,

Kevin