



### **Judith- Lung Cancer**

Judith, a busy real estate asset manager, mother and local volunteer was rushing to get to a routine chest scan scheduled right around the winter holidays in 2004. Due to overbookings at the hospital she was tempted to reschedule her appointment for a later date and return to the urgent calling of her “to-do” list. Luckily, the hospital technicians encouraged her to stay, and today she is thankful that she did.

Judith was diagnosed with stage IIIa lung cancer. She received 12 rounds of chemotherapy, 23 days of radiation therapy and surgery two weeks later to remove the upper lobe of her right lung. Her lung had trouble sealing following surgery which resulted in a 15-day hospital stay and four weeks of recovery at home. From the pathology report, some residual cancer was discovered leading her to undergo eight more rounds of chemotherapy. Judith hoped the worst of things were behind her and for almost three years they were.

Then in the summer of 2007 doctors found a recurrence of her cancer in a lymph node located deep in the center of Judith’s chest. Since she had already undergone surgery and received conventional radiation and given that the location of the cancer was close to sensitive, vital structures in her chest, her thoracic surgeon at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford, CT, Dr. Thayer, suggested CyberKnife radiosurgery. Because of its extreme precision, the CyberKnife System is able to focus the radiation delivery on the tumor and avoid surrounding healthy tissue. This meant Judith was a candidate despite having previous radiation.

“The only thing I was nervous about was receiving more radiation since I had already received several rounds of conventional radiation. But I knew that the CyberKnife was precise in its radiation delivery and therefore wouldn’t kill any of my healthy surrounding lung tissue”.

Judith underwent four outpatient treatment sessions with the CyberKnife. She was amazed by how easy her treatments were, especially compared to her previous experiences with surgery and conventional radiation.

“The first time around, it was an eight month period of my life spent at the cancer center, so the second time, when I had the option to do four treatments over two weeks and be done, it was a no brainer,” said Judith. “With the CyberKnife there was no downtime and I didn’t experience any side effects. During the treatments

I just lay comfortably on the treatment table and was able to watch the animal channel on a TV in the ceiling. It was a piece of cake compared to what I had been through already.”

Immediately following her CyberKnife treatments, Judith was able to resume her daily activities and got back to work right away. Nearly three years later Judith is doing well and has had no recurrences.

Throughout Judith’s diagnosis and treatments, she was always able to maintain a smile on her face. Whether laughing with her friends and family, volunteering her time at St. Francis hospital where she had received her CyberKnife treatments or experiencing the joy of watching her son graduate from high school, Judith spirits were always high.

“Humor was really what got me through it all. Everybody loves humor, everybody loves to laugh. You have to take the situation and laugh about it. There were times when I thought “life doesn’t get any worse then this”. When I would look in the mirror and I had two choices- I could either laugh or I could cry. And I just decided to laugh. Laughter, for me, really was the best medicine”.