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New Role for Dempsey; Rest in Peace, Molly

EDITED BY ELIZABETH WHITTINGTON

Dr. Derek “McDreamy” Shepherd may help treat patients on the ABC drama “Grey’s Anatomy,” but real-life co-survivor **Patrick Dempsey** has joined with the drug company Amgen to promote free support services and programs for cancer patients in its Breakaway from Cancer campaign. Dempsey, whose mother is a two-time ovarian cancer survivor, is well versed in the issues involved in cancer care and caregiving. “It was much harder the second time around,” he says, admitting that keeping morale up and staying optimistic was a challenge during the recurrence.

Dempsey’s sister, who worked at the hospital where their mother was being treated, helped navigate them through the maze of medical decisions and cancer jargon. “I think it’s overwhelming for a patient or a caregiver to go in and hear everything that is being told to them,” Dempsey says. “[My sister] had an inside track and the knowledge to take us through and around certain areas we were unclear on and deciphering what the doctor was telling us.”

Because of his family’s experience, Dempsey learned the importance of support services that organizations like the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship and The Wellness Community offer—enough that one of his goals is to open up a Wellness Community in his home state of Maine. In addition, his Ford racing team, Hyper Sport, has adopted Breakaway from Cancer as its official charity.

Amgen’s campaign has raised \$1 million to support TWC, a nonprofit that offers free support and education to survivors, and the NCCS, the oldest survivor-led advocacy group in the country. More information on the campaign can be found at www.breakawayfromcancer.com.

Molly Ivins, best-selling author and syndicated columnist, died of breast cancer in late January at age 62. Ivins was known for her sharp political wit and unique Texas style of writing. Her positions ranged from co-editor of the *Texas Observer*, a liberal political newspaper based in Austin, to reporter for *The New York Times*. Ivins’ columns quickly became popular and began syndication through Creator Syndicate in 1992—appearing in nearly 400 different publications. She was first diagnosed with inflammatory breast cancer in 1999 followed by a recurrence in 2003 and again in late 2005.