

Mary Kaye, 4/20/95

I was Mary Kaye's doctor for the past 6 and a half years. I met her for the first time just minutes after she first awoke from the surgery that diagnosed her cancer. She was seriously groggy and everybody was in a daze. I started to talk and, after introducing myself to her parents, was interrupted by a voice which emerged from under the sheets: "Can we talk about this some other time?" It was Mary Kaye. I learned then and there that the lights were always on when Mary Kaye was around. The spoken words as well as the unspoken ones were rapidly and exhaustively scrutinized, dissected, and appropriately challenged. And she did all this in a manner filled with respect and a genuine desire to know the truth. If maturity is measured by the way in which one deals with difficulties, then Mary Kaye lived a mature life beyond the imaginations of most of us. If achievements are measured by the honors bestowed by colleagues, then Mary Kaye ranks among the top. And if fulfillment is measured by the ability to focus on the positive in life, then Mary Kaye would surely win awards, as she has. You might ask how I, her doctor, would know about the fun times in Mary Kaye's life. The answer is that Mary Kaye made sure I knew. She was careful to communicate what was important to her. And living with gusto was number one. Mary Kaye had different ways of letting me know this. For example, we had one discussion in which I explained to her about a chemotherapy drug, the toxicities, side effects, blood tests, etc., Not first, but definitely on her list of questions was "can I still drink beer?" On another occasion, shortly after major surgery she quietly sneaked out of

town to see a Boston College basketball game in Florida, still very much recuperating from her surgery. Later her mother explained to me how worried she was that because the game was being televised, her doctor might see her there. Mary Kaye didn't only push medical technology to its limits. Much more importantly she pushed *herself* to unbelievable limits. But this is why her life was so full and its message, so profound. I might have been her doctor, but she surely taught me volumes about where medicine leaves off and the human spirit takes over. Mary Kaye often told me prior to a medical "test" what the results would be for that test. On rare occasions there might even have been a discrepancy, but without exception, those discrepancies always turned out to correct themselves with Mary Kaye having been right all along.

I have over and over again asked myself what it is about Mary Kaye that explained the energy she brought to the world. I couldn't narrow it down to one, but rather two characteristics. First was her love of life, her ability to define her goals, and achieve them despite numerous hardships; always in a manner that humbly suggested she was no different than anybody else. And the second distinguishing feature was her unswerving quest for the truth. Most people rarely hear in their lifetimes, the types of discussions cancer patients must hear. But Mary Kaye hungered for the truth at every step. And if anyone softened the message even to protect her, she could tell. She preferred the truth. Her reason, however, was what I call "vintage Mary Kaye." Practical, goal oriented, where-do-we-go-from-here. And she proved in her life that she was true to this philosophy; and that it really, really works. Mary Kaye not only achieved extraordinary things, but she set an example that was exceptional.

The other point I must make is that I have seen as clearly as can be that Mary Kaye's virtues did not arise in a vacuum. For the past four years she was in love with Boston College and her friends here, whose strength and support clearly inspired and energized her. And for the past 22 years, she was in love with her parents and sister, whose dedication to Mary Kaye was so deep, I *truly* cannot describe it in words. This is a family for whom love really knows no bounds. The focus, the energy, the intelligence, the practicality, the humility..... in short, it is not hard to understand exactly where Mary Kaye came from. And in this context I leave you by saying Mary Kaye, we've known you for far too short a time, but you've enriched us deeply and inspired us fully, forever.