

In memoriam - Jean (Dutra) Lewis – January 11, 1950-February 7, 2017

TBBCF Walk Participant and Volunteer

Obstacles never stopped Jean from living her life to the fullest. She was born with Congenital Aortic Stenosis, which occurs when the heart's aortic valve narrows. This narrowing prevents the valve from opening fully, which obstructs blood flow from the heart into the aorta and onward to the rest of the body. As an adult, Jean was overly aware of her health, knew she needed to maintain a healthy weight, and was very disciplined with her medications. To maintain her health, Jean was a long-time member of Weight Watchers. She enjoyed life, never complained and walked around obstacles that life presented.

In 2008, Jean was diagnosed with stage I breast cancer, just three years after her twin sister, Joan, had been diagnosed with the same disease. Both Jean and Joan's breast cancer was detected during their annual mammography test, which they both attest to the importance of this screening tool. Due to Jean's heart condition, she was not a candidate for traditional treatment, such as radiation, but did undergo a mastectomy and reconstruction surgery, as well as five years of maintenance therapy.

Both Jean and Joan developed an interest in the Terri Brodeur Breast Cancer Foundation through their own experiences with breast cancer. They particularly liked that 100% of fundraising dollars goes directly to breast cancer research.



In 2009 and 2010, Jean and Joan completed the TBBCF half marathon walk, despite Jean experiencing atrial heart fibrillation, an irregular heartbeat, during the 2010 event. Jean's perseverance to finish the walk is a testament to her "no quit" personality. In 2011, Jean, alongside her sister Joan and nieces Kimberly Coleman and Sarah Sweney, set out to complete the half marathon for the third year in a row. With only a half mile left, Jean was unable to finish the walk due to shortness of breath and weakness in her legs. These were again side effects from her heart condition, which eventually led to Jean needing a pacemaker. For the following four years, Jean volunteered her impeccable organizational services to the TBBCF Walk registration and packet pick up. This was her way of staying involved in a foundation that meant so much to her.



Pictured here (l-r) Jean's niece Sarah Sweney, Jean Lewis, Jean's twin sister Joan Doucette, and Jean's niece Kimberly Koelman.

After Jean's passing, her husband Jim received a letter from Dr. John F. Setaro, a cardiologist who treated Jean, on behalf of the physicians and staff at Yale Cardiology's Branford office. "None of us will ever forget her shining example of strength and courage in fighting so many serious diseases for so long. Her desire to be healthy and to live a normal life was truly impressive. Equally memorable has been your unforgettable support and loyalty, which gave her such strength and a reason to live. We will truly miss Jean and her absence will long be felt by friends and family, surely. You can take great pride in your ever-supportive role in her life, and we hope that one day the happy memories will come to dominate the more recent sad ones."

The following are excerpts from Jean's obituary.

Jean (Dutra) Lewis, 67, passed away Tuesday, February 7, 2017 in Yale-New Haven Hospital.

Jean was born on January 11, 1950 in Meriden. She is the daughter of the late Arthur P and Mary (Augustyn) Dutra. Mrs. Lewis is survived by her loving husband Jim, her sister Beverly D. Miller, her twin sister Joan D. Doucette and many nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews. She is predeceased by her brother, Arthur P. Dutra Jr.

Jean graduated from CCSU with her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education in 1972. She married Jim Lewis in Meriden on April 30, 1976. She was a certified Paralegal and worked for Booth & Mattern for many years. She later worked for Pfizer in New London as a Resource

Administrator. She demonstrated impeccable organizational skill in her jobs and in her everyday life. She loved to cook, ATV and snowmobile as well as going boating and fishing with her husband, Jim, at their second home in Maine.

Donations may be made in Jean's memory to the Terri Brodeur Breast Cancer Foundation (TBBCF), PO Box 785, New London, CT 06320.