

I lost my beloved mother, Ann Lundy, to complications related to carcinoid cancer on November 6, 2000. For several years leading up to her death, my mom would complain of vague stomach pains, weakness, even dizzy spells that seemed to always boil down to a diagnosis of normal complications related to the aging process (she was in her mid 70's) and her settling for the usual regimen of antacids. Finally when she continued to lose weight and become weaker, her HMO finally sent her for a GI series and with some pushing, a CT scan. The CT scan showed us the small, inoperable tumor that sat on her mesenteric artery that had been blocking blood flow to her intestines. Only through a series of blood and urine tests could they positively determine it was carcinoid disease. In spite of efforts to start the Sandostatin therapy, my mother lost her brave battle—succumbing to an ischemic bowel the day she was to start treatment.

Both my husband and myself are in the health care field. I can not tell you how I wish we had been more aggressive in demanding diagnostic studies to determine the real cause of her symptoms and how angry we are that the system failed us. We realize now that each and every person must be in charge and assertive when it comes to finding our own health pathways and not accepting the status quo. Life is so precious—at every age!

Thankfully, now there is this wonderful foundation that is doing all it can to promote awareness regarding this disease. Only through continued research and information can the word be spread to rule out diseases such as carcinoid cancer so valuable time will not be wasted on unnecessary and unhelpful therapies that only stole time and hope from all of us.

My mother faced many challenges in her life and this one being her biggest. She was brave and beautiful, loving and honest. She left this world with the gift of her grace and humor. Even until the end, thinking of us and trying to protect us from the pain of this separation. She imparted great faith to us with a love that will last a lifetime. I was so proud of the way she lived and even prouder of her courage at the end. She was my best friend and enduring supporter...she was my mom.

Lisa Larcher