



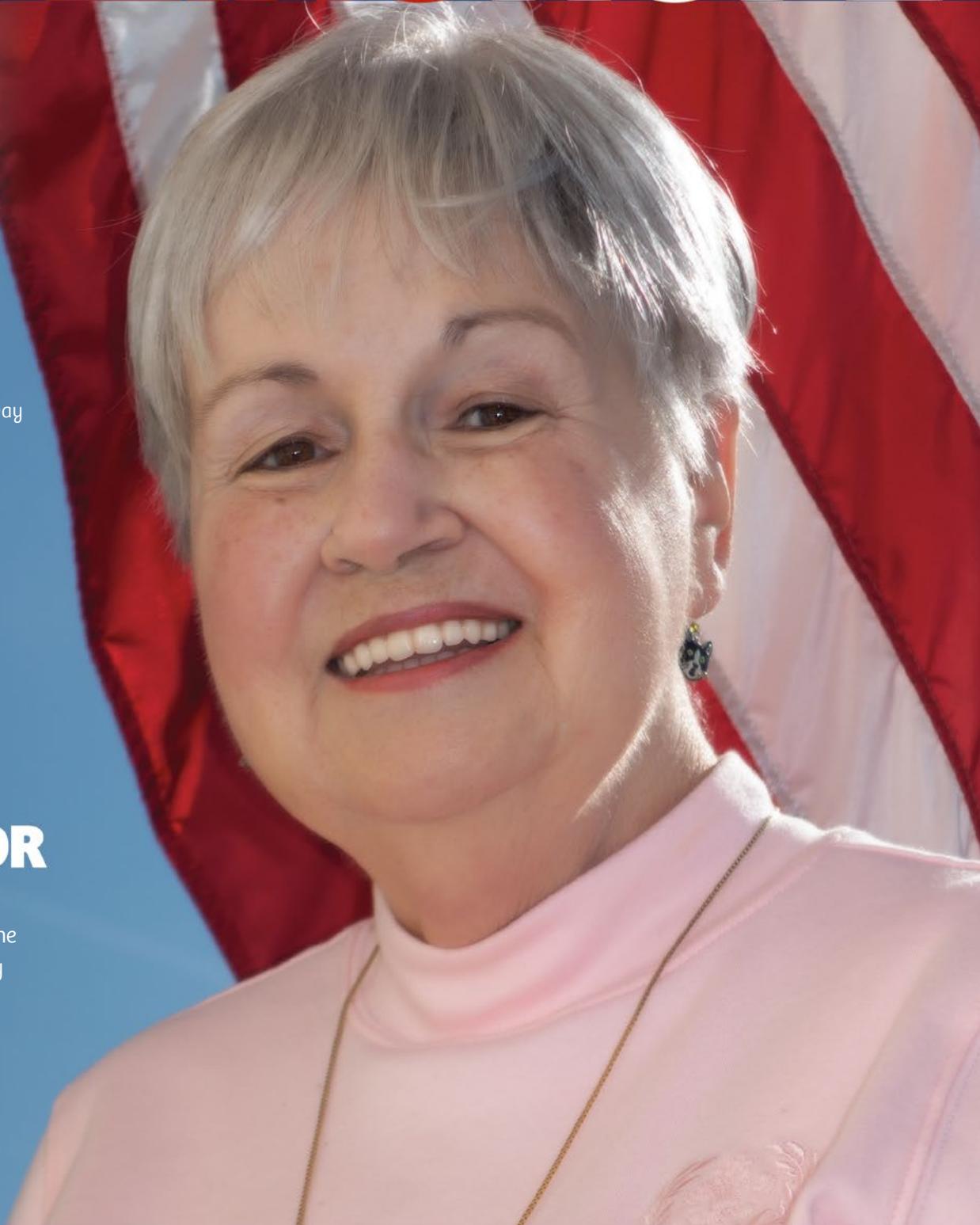
# HEALING HOPE

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## SURVIVOR

Breast cancer survivor  
Cathy Smullen at her home  
in the beloved community  
of Littlebrook.





# ★ Cathy Smullen ★

Successful ...

## — CANCER — SURVIVOR

In 1974, Bob and Cathy Smullen decided to take a risk and move their young family to the other side of the country. Trading their beloved Adirondack Mountains for a new life in sunny California was a major change.

Years later, after their children were raised, a massive wildfire ravaged California. The Smullen's home and belongings were taken by the fire. Now at retirement age, the couple was living in their RV and decided to take a road trip across the United

States in search of a place to permanently retire.

"Oregon took our hearts", Cathy exclaimed. While traveling the Columbia River Scenic Highway, they stopped to enjoy the waterfalls. Cathy turned to Bob and said, "I like it here better than the Adirondacks", she explained. As they traveled the Beaver state searching for a right place they discovered Roseburg. "Then we found Littlebrook, it was absolutely perfect for us so we moved here in 2011", Cathy said.

Cathy and Bob quickly fell in love with their new community at Littlebrook by participating in a host of activities, making new friends, and walking the riverside trails.

In August of 2013, Cathy received notice, from her mammogram screening, that an area believed to be benign was detected. However, a further comparison to her previous screening was needed. Two days later, a second notice arrived recommending further imaging studies. Bob became worried. Roughly 45 days after her screening Cathy was diagnosed with stage IIIc breast cancer. "It was horrible during that waiting time", Bob said. "The reason it took so long is because the type of cancer I had, Invasive Lobular Carcinoma, is one that hides. It was hiding behind a scar", Cathy explained. The diagnosis devastated Bob. Cathy shared her thoughts, "Yes, I was concerned with the diagnosis, but we had already experienced major changes in our lives with the relocation and wildfire taking our home, I believe this helped us prepare for what we needed to do. We knew we were strong, but this made me ask how strong am I?"

When news got out in Littlebrook that Cathy had breast cancer about 20 residents came out and vowed their support to help Cathy and Bob get through this. Many were also cancer survivors.

On October 14, 2013, Dr. Soder performed breast surgery. 30 of 32 lymph nodes were cancerous and removed from her right breast. Cathy then met with Dr. Williams who ran further tests which brought positive news. The cancer had not spread. Cathy's cancer treatment protocol called for the insertion of a port, 12 weekly cycles of Chemotherapy followed by 33 radiation therapy sessions.

During her cancer treatment, Cathy's body grew weak. "Chemotherapy is taxing. One day I was leaving the treatment area and the elevator door looked like it was at the end of a very long tunnel. They call it chemo fog. I was not sure I could make it. I just kept putting one foot in front of the other until we made it to the elevator. Food tastes like cardboard, the treatment changes your

taste, the only thing that tasted good to me were peaches. I met with CCC's dietitian Ally Gottfried, and she helped me understand how to change my diet so that as my appetite waned, the foods I did eat would provide the most energy to my body. During treatment I also lost my hair. I knew it was coming. My friend LaVaughn and I decided to participate in the Look Good Feel Better program at the CCC. I was wearing a long grey wig, LaVaughn was snapping pictures and sending them to Bob. We just had a great time. While things are difficult, you just have to have moments of joy. It's important to help you keep going. For radiation treatment, they give you tattoos to locate the radiation treatment area. When I told my grandchildren I had gotten some tattoos, rather than texting me they actually called me, to ask what kind of tattoo I had gotten," Cathy explained. After Chemotherapy, and during radiation therapy, Cathy's strength slowly began to return. In July of 2014, Cathy completed her cancer treatment. In a follow up visit with Dr. Williams he pointed out that in her patient surveys she mentioned being tired all the time. He detected an iron deficiency in her bloodwork and recommended transfusions. "Dr. Williams told me that in about two months you will feel wonderful. And I did, I got all of my energy back and could return to the things I used to do. I attribute this to Dr. Williams following up so closely. That really put me on the path to full recovery", Cathy said.

Back at Littlebrook, during her treatment, Cathy and Bob's community honored their vows by bringing meals, providing transportation, and being there for whatever the two needed.

Today, Cathy returns to the Community Cancer Center for checkups on an annual basis. Her life at Littlebrook has returned to normal with the only exception being she is not quite ready to resume the Wii bowling league because of knee surgery. Won't you join us, and the folks at Littlebrook, in recognizing Bob and Cathy's upcoming Golden Wedding Anniversary? Cheers!