

Spirit of *Pink*



SURVIVORS STAND UP TO CANCER

LouAnn Alexander of Phoenix, Arizona, was again diagnosed with breast cancer in early 2009 after undergoing lumpectomy, chemotherapy and radiation in 1998 for a self-discovered nodule. Last year, the trim, effervescent 28-year Southwest Airlines flight attendant chose bilateral mastectomy—removing both breasts. Like many newly diagnosed women, rushed and “in shock,” LouAnn wasn’t offered complete reconstruction options. “You must ask,” she says.

A failed initial reconstruction and stubborn infection did not deter her. LouAnn vowed, “I won’t allow this to impact the rest of my life.”

She coincidentally heard of “incredible work” at St. Charles Surgical Hospital (www.scsch.com) and Center for Restorative Breast Surgery (www.breastcenter.com) in New Orleans, Louisiana. There, Frank DellaCroce, MD, FACS; Scott Sullivan, MD, FACS; and Christopher G. Trahan, MD, direct an internationally recognized, dedicated hospital for women seeking the most advanced methods of breast reconstruction utilizing the body’s own tissue. More than 3,000 procedures have been performed—many on women for whom traditional reconstruction methods are not possible.

After her successful stacked DIEP flap procedure by Dr. Sullivan, LouAnn is ecstatic. Pioneered at the center, it’s another option for thin women and utilizes sophisticated microsurgical techniques for greater volume to the reconstructed breast. Other advanced procedures such as SIEA, SGAP and IGAP spare important, necessary functional muscles.

“I feel so blessed I only had breast cancer,” LouAnn says. “When I look in the mirror, my breasts are so natural I don’t have that daily cancer reminder. No one would know they’re not my “originals.”

By: Stephanie Stephens

