



Marilyn Woods

Survivor

## My Life Story...

- ❖ Born, raised, and always lived in Michigan
- ❖ 70 years “young”
- ❖ Married to Larry since 1971  
(Yes! 49 years and still in love)
- ❖ Two adult sons, and three fantastic grandchildren
- ❖ Master Degree from Central Michigan University in Business Administration
- ❖ Worked in office administration and then college administration until retirement in 2012.
- ❖ Love traveling, family gatherings, cooking, quilting.  
Always moving!



# My Cancer Story

- On March 3, 2019, I went to the ER convinced I was having an appendicitis attack. (Pain was gone the next day and never returned.)
- Within two hours I received a preliminary diagnosis of Leukemia which was later confirmed to be Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML)
- Began chemotherapy receiving induction therapy and 5 rounds of consolidation before being accepted into the Stem Cell Transplant Program at Henry Ford Main Hospital in Detroit. Transplant was October 17, 2019.
- GVHD started to show up in March of 2020; primarily as a severe skin rash with blister-like sores and terrible itching.
- I also have not been able to sustain a viable platelet count.

# Coping with cGVHD...

- Fortunately, my GVHD has only been affecting my skin, no organs.
- Lots of steroids, creams and oral, to try to control rash.
- Itching was a terrible nuisance; kept me up at night. The rash was head to toe. I didn't want to look in a mirror. Lack of sleep affected my personality, contributed to some depression. Worked with BMT team to get through outbreaks and now try to control minor rash.
- CV19 also affected what I did or didn't do. I am very conscientious about where I might go and with whom. Mostly, I am at home. Visitors are limited so as to not get infected.

# Living with cGVHD...

## **HOW TO BE AND STAY MENTALLY STRONG.** *(Ina Pinkney, Breakfast Queen of Chicago)*

- Don't fear alone time.
- Don't dwell on the past.
- Don't feel the world owes you.
- Don't expect immediate results.
- Don't waste time feeling sorry for yourself.
- Don't waste energy on things you can't control
- Don't let others influence your emotions.
- Don't resent other people's success.
- Don't shy away from responsibilities.
- Don't give up after the first failure.
- Don't fear taking calculated risks.

I added these...

- DO keep a diary/notebook.
- DO listen to your doctors and caregivers.
- DO ask questions
- DO trust yourself.
- DO cry!
- DO eat ice cream.
- DO smile!
- DO accept help from others.
- DO thank all those helping care for you.
- DO pray! And thank God for all you do have!