

## What do you think of when you think of **life support?**

My name is Tracey S. Neldare, a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I am 53 years old and I've been married for 30 years to my wonderful husband, Tramelle. I am the mother of two adult children and a grandmother to a 2-year-old grandson who is the absolute joy of my life. And last, but certainly not least, I am a breast cancer survivor.



When you or a loved one is faced with a cancer diagnosis,  
**choose the experts  
at the Breast  
& GYN Cancer  
Pavilion in Baton  
Rouge, Louisiana.**



**N**ow let me tell you what the words “life support” mean to me.

In late March of 2020, while performing a self-exam in the shower, I felt a lump in my right breast. I wasn't very alarmed about it and decided to wait a few days to see if anything would change. I informed my husband about the lump and told him I thought I would wait until COVID settled down before making an appointment. Two days later, something moved me to call my gynecologist—and I'm sure that something was God.

I went in for a mammogram, which came back abnormal. I was immediately sent to radiology where a mass was detected, then referred to Dr. Cecilia Cuntz, Woman's Hospital breast specialist. Remember, this is during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning I was alone in the hospital. Although my husband was sitting in the parking lot, I started to feel very alone and very afraid. I met with Dr. Cuntz, who explained that they could do a biopsy that same day. That was the longest walk of my life to the other side of the hospital.

Five days later, during a virtual visit with Dr. Cuntz, I was diagnosed with Invasive Ductal Triple Negative Breast Cancer. Dr. Lauren Zatarain, medical oncologist at the Breast & GYN Cancer Pavilion, immediately stepped in with a treatment plan, and we began, thus starting my journey into the unknown world of breast cancer and giving new meaning to the words “life support.”

I'm sure you all thought of “life support” as an ICU room, breathing machines, and wires everywhere.

I see the words “life support” as faith in God and unbelievable support from family and friends. I went through five months of chemotherapy, and during those five months, my faith in God and man grew tremendously. And still today my faith continues to grow.

I have received so many blessings of every type. Personal calls, cards, flowers, messages of well wishes, gifts, food, advice, and most of all prayers. Each and every day that I received chemotherapy, friends and family would gather outside in the sweltering heat so that I could look out and see #TeamTracey waving up to me. And the nurses and staff at the Pavilion were nothing short of amazing. They all became my “life support.” They all encouraged me to keep fighting, and I did.

It was very important to me to be able to receive my treatment at the Breast & GYN Cancer Pavilion. To be able to walk in, have my bloodwork, do my infusion, and visit with my doctor in such a beautiful facility that has such great technology was so convenient.

With the support of the staff at Woman's Hospital and Mary Bird Perkins – Our Lady of the Lake Cancer Center at the Breast & GYN Cancer Pavilion, I never felt lonely while I was going through treatment. They, too, are a part of my “life support.”

My advice to you ladies would be to have your mammograms but also perform self-check exams in between. Put nothing off until tomorrow and tell your story. My journey is not over yet.



### When you choose the Breast & GYN Cancer Pavilion, you choose:

- Advanced technology and techniques, such as HDR brachytherapy and hypofractionation
- A comfortable treatment environment with semi-private chemotherapy bays
- Access to more national clinical trials
- One location for diagnosis, lab work, surgery, treatment, and support
- Support for you and your loved ones

### Questions or need a second opinion?

Call the CancerAnswer Call Line:

**(225) 215-7600**

MARY BIRD PERKINS  
OUR LADY OF THE LAKE  
**CANCER CENTER**



**Woman's**



500 Rue de la Vie, Baton Rouge, LA | [BreastandGYNCancer.org](https://BreastandGYNCancer.org)