

For immediate release  
November 30, 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of Mrs. Ford's Press Secretary

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TEXT OF MRS FORD'S REMARKS ON RECEIPT OF THE COMMUNICATOR OF HOPE  
AWARD OF THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY, Wednesday, December 1, 1976  
New York City

Knowing my mastectomy helped save lives and reduce fear brought me strength and hope, and it has been a very special privilege to share that hope with others.

Breast cancer is such a personal and emotional experience for any woman no matter what her age. I had the advantage of being married to a very fine man and of having four lovely children. They helped me through the difficulties of realizing what I had to face in life.

What I had to accept was that I had cancer and that it could reoccur at any time. I had to learn to live with the insidious disease we are trying to conquer and which takes so many lives. Facing up to this reality becomes a daily fact of life for all cancer patients.

Because so many hundreds of thousands of women in the world have breast cancer, I felt I had to share my experience with them, so that they would take precautions. In my travels as First Lady, many women who had had mastectomies--some 25 or 30 years ago--shared their experiences with me.

The sharing of this emotional and frightening experience with other breast cancer patients has communicated hope to me. I accept this honor and your gracious comments with gratitude to all who helped me face up to cancer.

My hope today is that the fight to alert women to the need for self-care moves ahead vigorously. I challenge those of you in the media to use your talents to battle ignorance and fear about breast cancer. Too many women still die, because fear delays diagnosis and treatment. So much remains to be done, and we all can be communicators of hope.

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