

# LRM

LINCOLN ROAD MAGAZINE

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FOR THE SEASON



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**"ONCE YOU'VE HAD IT, YOU ALWAYS THINK ABOUT IT. IT DOESN'T MATTER IF IT'S BEEN 25 YEARS. IF THIS CAN HAPPEN TO ANYBODY ONCE, IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYBODY AGAIN."**



Color photo: Jane Torres poses next to the specialty license plate she created. B&W: Torres with her children at her son's Tuft University graduation in 1994.

## A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

When Jane Torres, a devoted wife, career woman and mother of two, was diagnosed with breast cancer at 47, a woman told her that one day she'd be grateful she got the disease. "I thought she was absolutely crazy, and the only reason I didn't tell her so was because she had also endured the same problem," says Torres.

The woman turned out to be right, as the diagnosis changed Torres' life forever. "It was a giant wake up call for me, a time to make those changes in my life I always put off and to take the time to enjoy the people I was too busy to enjoy." Before the disease struck, Torres specialized in diversity training and consulting work for police and fire departments around the country. But for Torres, the most agonizing part of the whole ordeal wasn't putting her career on hold; it was breaking the news to her family, especially to her children. "My daughter, who was 17 at the time, wanted to be included in everything and to know what was going on," she says. "It

was difficult for me because I just wanted to protect her, and she didn't want to be protected."

It's been 11 cancer-free years since her last treatment. "Throughout my years of dealing with this, I've met some absolutely wonderful people who have joined with me to make a difference in the world of breast cancer," she says. "It's been a long journey, it's been a hard journey, but it certainly has had some benefits."

In 1995, Torres joined five other South Floridian breast cancer survivors and created the Florida Breast Cancer Coalition Research Foundation. Today, she's president of the organization and is thrilled to be alive. "Once you've had it, you always think about it. It doesn't matter if it's been 25 years. If this can happen to anybody once, it can happen to anybody again," she says. "Once you have been touched by it, once you have been affected, you never forget."

### FYI

The Florida Breast Cancer Coalition Research Foundation is a non-profit organization affiliated with the National Breast Cancer Coalition. Jane Torres has created a specialty license plate with \$25 of each sale going directly to her foundation for cancer research and education awareness in Florida.