

Around the water cooler: Q & A with Scott Seaman

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Scott Seaman is a commercial trial lawyer and partner at Meckler Bulger Tilson Marick & Pearson in Chicago, where he serves as chairman of the firm's insurance coverage counseling and litigation practice group. He has been counsel in numerous high profile insurance coverage cases and has co-authored *Allocation of Losses in Complex Insurance Coverage Cases* (2d Ed. 2008), a leading treatise on contemporary insurance and reinsurance issues. Seaman is very passionate about his practice and proud to be practicing with some of the country's leading insurance lawyers. But rather than covering Seaman's battles with adversaries in the courtroom, *Chicago Lawyer* asked him about his encounter with the one adversary he did not think he could defeat – cancer.

Seaman is a 12-year survivor of non-Hodgkin lymphoma. He credits his wife and daughter, good doctors, and the support of his law partners for his survival. While practicing law on a full-time basis, Seaman, along with his wife Charlene McMann, have been on a mission to cure cancer.

Along the way they co-founded the first chapter of a national blood cancer organization here in Chicago, started a walk/run in Chicago that is now an annual event in more than 16 American cities, and helped to raise awareness and millions of dollars for cancer research. The couple wrote a book entitled, "Battling and Beating Cancer – The Cancer Survival Book" (available at amazon.com or charleneand-scott.org), host an internet talk radio show called "Battling and Beating Cancer," which streams live over the internet on Tuesday evenings, and started the Chicago Blood Cancer Foundation.

Can tell us what your book is about?

The book is all about battling and beating cancer. The first part tells our story, taking the reader with us from diagnosis, surgery,

chemotherapy, radiation therapy, follow-up testing, and provides the insights, fears, and triumphs of a cancer survivor and caregiver. The point is to demystify the experience and enlighten people through our experience.

The second part focuses on the steps and approach people should consider taking to survive cancer. We cover: selecting the best doctors and treatment centers; obtaining a prompt and proper diagnosis; understanding medical tests and diagnostic tools; surviving your hospital stay; conventional treatments, revolutionary treatments, and clinical trials; survival rates and making appropriate adjustments to get on the right side of the statistics; developing a "cancer warrior" mentality; taking advantage of complementary therapies and a healthy lifestyle to help you beat the disease; the role of the immune system in beating cancer; and why blood cancer research is the super-highway to curing cancer.

The final part is a collection of useful resources, such as a detailed listing of questions to ask your doctors at each critical phase (we call it deposing your doctor); tips doctors may not tell you; and a listing of organizations, Web sites, and resources available to help patients get the support and information they need about their type of cancer and the treatments. We also include a patient medical information workbook so people can take the book with them and record relevant health information.

What made you decide to write the book?

My wife Charlene counsels and advocates on behalf of cancer patients on a regular basis and suggested to me that people would benefit from reading about our experience. No matter how smart you are or how capable you are in your profession, when you hear the words "you have cancer," it hits you like a ton of bricks and you need resources and a place to turn. We wrote the book that we wish we had available to us when we were going through the ordeal.

How long did it take you to write the book, and what do you hope people will get out of it?

We (mostly Charlene) worked on it over a period of about six months. I did not keep notes or a journal, but the experience, details, and feelings were so engrained in our minds that lack of recollection or detail simply was not an issue. We hope people will gain the information, hope, and the "cancer warrior" mentality they need to survive cancer and are inspired to take some steps to help others beat cancer.

Why did you start Chicago Blood Cancer Foundation and what is its mission?

Charlene, Laura and Michael Werner (the couple who co-founded the organization with us) and I believe it is incumbent upon people impacted by cancer to take the lead in curing cancer. Chicago Blood Cancer Foundation's mission is to cure blood cancer by raising money and awareness for lymphoma, leukemia, and myeloma research. We seek to maximize the impact of donations by having an all volunteer organization so that money donated goes to research, not administrative expenses. The Chicago area has some of the finest medical research institutions in the world and we wanted to support the leading Chicago area institutions to ensure that Chicago area residents have world-class treatments and doctors available to them and leading researchers developing more efficacious treatments and cures.

Chicago Blood Cancer's "Out For Blood" Team will participate in a bike ride and host an "Extravaganza" on Sunday, Sept. 12. The legal community in Chicago is incredible in their philanthropic pursuits and we hope that lawyers and law firms will participate in the bike ride and that non-riders will form a "Virtual Vampire" team on-line or join us for the Extravaganza. Information and registration will be available on our website (www.chicagobloodcancer.org), which will be operational by mid-April. ■