



LAURIE WAGNER

Jan. 18, 1973 - Oct. 22, 2008

God must have needed someone to coach Heaven's softball team, someone who could inspire children beyond any dream, and someone who could make people smile even if they didn't feel like it. Laurie Wagner was a cyclone of passion, kindness, outrageousness, courage and warmth to nearly everyone she encountered. They say some people are bigger than life, but at times, life really was barely big enough to contain Laurie.

She was born in Sandusky, Ohio where she grew up in an old green house that she never stopped loving and for 12 years walked down the street to her school -- St. Mary's Central Catholic. From there she went on to the University of Toledo, where she earned a degree in special education to prepare her for her career as a social worker. But Laurie's specialty was always making her family; friends and hundreds of others feel good about themselves. She lost her hair as a child and it never grew back. Even as a little girl, she never used it as an excuse to hide who she was. When the stares came from strangers or a waitress called her sir, she would just smile and nod her beautiful head. She used a mix of her mom's toughness and her dad's gentleness to persevere through all of life's challenges. She stared down her toughest opponent — cancer — with that same gumption before it took her at 35.

Laurie loved caring for her parents, playing poker with her friends, and ridiculing her brothers without mercy. She worshipped her three nephews and one niece, and it was her booming voice that could be heard above all others when they would slap a double down the line, catch a touchdown pass or kick a soccer goal.

Laurie was highly involved in the Springfield Township Softball league in Holland, Ohio where she shared her knowledge and love of the game with as many young girls as she could. She could always be found on a softball field cheering on "her girls".

The last few years, you could usually find her in the middle of a softball diamond with her beloved's Wizards Wagner travel softball team that became part of her soul. It was there, when she was fighting with her girls for one more inning in one more tournament, that she was happiest. The best stories about her have R-rated language and aren't fit for print. But those are what inspire us to shake our heads, chuckle and know that there will never, ever be someone in our lives like that Laurie.

We love you, Laurie