

Pancreatic Cancer Survivor Shares a Message of Hope [VIDEO]

November is Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month. Laura Foote shares her story to bring hope and express gratitude.

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Laura Foote is now three years out from her [pancreatic cancer](#) diagnosis, thanks to a surgery performed by [Richard Schulick, MD, MBA](#), director of the [University of Colorado Cancer Center](#) and chair of the [Department of Surgery](#). In honor of Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, which is marked each November, she shares her story in the video above. The transcript is below:

Laura Foote: I just knew that we're all given so many days in this world, and I thought, "Well, this is my destiny, but I am going to see what I can do to not make it my destiny." And that's what I did. I've been happily married for 44 years. We have two daughters, a granddaughter on the way, and a great-granddaughter. I'm a beekeeper. I love camping and waterskiing and hiking and biking, and I just, I love life.

Schulick: The first time I met Laura was in our pancreatic cancer [multidisciplinary clinic](#) that meets every Tuesday. And what I saw was a very energetic patient who was very concerned about her diagnosis. She had undergone several months of chemotherapy already, which is very common in patients with pancreatic cancer. But despite having undergone chemotherapy, I could see this vibrant, vivacious patient who wanted to beat this cancer and get on with life.

Laura Foote: So my journey started out with some stomach issues, and I ultimately had my gallbladder taken out. And they told me that my gallbladder was gangrene. And that was really unusual. So they said, "Huh, why?" I ended up going to Anschutz [the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus], and I was diagnosed with a tumor that had been on my gallbladder, which was pancreatic cancer. And that was May 6 of 2019.

Schulick: In the United States today, pancreatic cancer is the number-three cancer killer. Pancreatic cancer is often very silent, until it gets to the later stages. Many patients with pancreatic cancer don't have specific symptoms. They have a cancer that's growing within their pancreas, and when it gets to a large enough size, or if it spreads to other areas, then they start getting symptoms.

Laura Foote: I believe when I was in the doctor's office in the multidisciplinary department, and all

those doctors all approached me, they were so positive. And they said, “We’re calling for a cure with you. You know, that’s it, we’re going for a cure.” And I thought, “Well, I can’t let them down. So I’ve got to do what I need to do on my end to make this happen.” Dr. Schulick comes in to visit with me right before surgery. And he looked at me and he goes, “Well, are you ready for this?” And I was ready. But what he doesn’t know is when he walked away, I said, “I love you.” Because, you know, there’s somebody that doesn’t really know you. And they’re about to basically save your life. So I was eternally grateful.

Dana Foote: Sitting down with Dr. Schulick at the very beginning, when he gave me the odds of pancreatic survivor in the stages that she was in, the numbers were not in our favor. The last numbers I got from Dr. Schulick, where she’s at now, two years later, are about 10 times better.

Schulick: Pancreatic cancer is a rough cancer, and many people, despite getting optimal therapy such as chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery, will have what we call a recurrence, meaning the cancer comes back. But with Laura now being three years out, and without seeing signs of the cancer, we can’t say that it won’t come back for sure. But the odds are looking much better.

Laura Foote: Personally, I would say to everybody that helped me, because this is how I am, I would say “I love you.” And thank you for taking care of me. And the love and the support. Everything that they did to help me was phenomenal.

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