

# A Tribute to Maureen Coleman

In 2013 we lost one of our greatest champions of cancer patients, Maureen Coleman, the Founder and Past President of the Carcinoid Neuroendocrine Society Canada, also known as CNETS Canada. As we reach the one-year anniversary of Maureen's passing, it's important to reflect on the tremendous impact she had on the NET cancer community.

Maureen's contribution began in 2001 when she was diagnosed with neuroendocrine tumours, a rare form of cancer. Maureen and a few other Toronto-based patients funneled their feelings of loneliness in their diagnosis into a passionate drive to support each other and share information among themselves and other patients. This support group became CNETS Canada in 2007 and obtained charitable status in 2008.

Maureen's passion touched many people and she developed a worldwide reputation as a staunch NET cancer advocate with an entrepreneurial ability to approach the topic from many different angles. She learned as much as she could about neuroendocrine cancers, travelling the world to attend conferences so that she could bring back vital information for Canadian patients. Back home, Maureen developed NET cancer conferences across Canada, featuring world-renowned experts. The agendas provided important Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits that physicians are required to earn to retain their licenses and which was both an incentive and a mark of credibility for the content that was delivered.

She implemented a support model that offered direct patient support by phone and through in-person meetings of support groups. She fought for access to diagnostics and treatment options, spearheaded CNETS Canada's financial support of neuroendocrine cancer-specific research and built a partnership with the Cancer Research Society that resulted in the CNETS Canada annual NET Cancer Fundraising Day. Maureen was also one of the founding members of INCA (International NET Cancer Alliance) and held a strong vision of a NET cancer community without borders.

Beyond Maureen's passion as a cancer advocate she was a mom, a daughter, a partner, a sister and a dear friend to many. She loved all of these roles and fulfilled them



**A passionate NET cancer leader, educator and friend**

with great intensity. She was a warm, compassionate, intelligent and genuine individual who always put the needs of others above herself and never let people down when they asked for support.

Maureen was tenacious and courageous. She was also an educator, a profession that served her well as she worked to educate patients, medical professionals and governments about the complexities of NETS and patients' unique needs. Though there were times when she was leading the way virtually on her own, she never faltered. She dedicated herself to our cause and pushed ahead to accomplish great things personally and on behalf of CNETS Canada and the NET patient community.

Maureen's legacy lives on in CNETS Canada. There are no words to accurately express the immense loss we continue to feel. We are in awe of everything Maureen accomplished and so proud to continue carrying out her dream. Maureen's beautiful smile and energy continue to shine on us as we think of her. As has been said before, she was a rare gem, worthy of our remembrance.

By Jackie Herman, President, CNETS Canada