

Meet Erin (She's My Idol)

Exactly 10 years ago, a young *Glamour* staffer told the world about the deadly diagnosis she'd just received. And then she awed us all.



▲ **May 2002** Erin's first story. "Without successful treatment," she writes, "CML patients survive four to seven years from diagnosis. Oh my God, I'd be 27." She goes on the new drug Gleevec.

I remember it like it was yesterday: 10 years ago, a bright, up-and-coming *Glamour* assistant named Erin Zammatt walked into my office and told me she had cancer—not just any cancer, but a rare form of leukemia (CML). In an incredible coincidence, *Glamour* had just profiled three female CML survivors; those women were on a new lifesaving drug, and Erin wanted it too. She was shaking that day, but she was determined. And that, I would learn, was classic Erin. She immediately called the doctor in our story to see if he'd treat her; then she chronicled her roller-coaster journey in *Glamour*, a story millions of you followed. Now, on her 10-year "cancer-versary," she's back in the spotlight, raising funds (see below) and reflecting. Yes, she'll take medication "maybe forever...but I know how lucky I am," she says. "At 23 I dreamed of having the life I live now, and I didn't think it could ever come true."

But she *made* it come true. So now I get to do something I've been wanting to do for a decade, and that is to write the following sentence: Sorry, cancer; Erin won.



Cindi Leive

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▲ **April 2003** A shock: Her sister Melissa, center, is diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma. "What else will happen to our family now?" Erin wonders.



▲ **November 2004** Erin gets a bone marrow biopsy. By this time, cancer's her new normal. She begins to exhale and plan her wedding.



▲ **April 2005** New author Erin with me and host Denise Rich at Erin's book party. (Incidentally, I went into labor there; thanks to Erin, my son was born under a good star!)



▲ **July 2005** Erin and Nick Ruddy at their wedding. "When my mind is racing with what-ifs," Erin says, "I always find a way back to his arms. Whatever happens, we'll have each other." Lovely detail: Her oncologist's wife designed that beautiful dress.



▶ **January 2010** Pregnant with her second child, Nora. Erin went off Gleevec to have both babies—a controversial decision. "What if my disease comes back?" she worried. But it didn't.

▲ **February 2012** On vacation with Nora, Nick, and Alex. "Cancer helped me figure out fast what was important to me," Erin says. And of all her accomplishments, "I am probably proudest of the fact that I am happy."



With *Glamour* photo director Suzanne Donaldson, a fellow leukemia survivor and LLS supporter

GIVEBACK

Which brings us to your selfless moment of the month: helping other women like Erin and her sister (both healthy today).

For Erin, the **Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS)** has been literally lifesaving. It funded research for the cancer drug she relies on, "and I still cry in every meeting," she says. "They are an inspiration for me and Melissa. Saying I owe them is an understatement!" To repay that debt, Erin wants to raise \$100,000 for LLS by May 17. Go to erin.zammattruddy.com to donate—you'll help sponsor research grants that keep the curing going.

TOP: GRANT CORNETT; LEIVE: MATTHIAS VRIENS MCGRATH; HAIR: BERTRAND W.; MAKEUP: KARAN MITCHELL; BOTH AT TRACEY MATTINGLY.COM; ALL OTHERS: COURTESY OF SUBJECTS