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Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications  
Phone: 320-589-6414, [weberm@morris.umn.edu](mailto:weberm@morris.umn.edu)

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer  
Phone: 320-589-6068, [jrray@morris.umn.edu](mailto:jrray@morris.umn.edu)

**Triathlete mother and son celebrate restored health**

*Summary: As the campus prepares for Relay for Life, Stemper '11 and mother share their cancer story.*

(April 29, 2010)-Under gray and windy skies, Megan Webster of Richfield, finished the 2010 Tinman Triathlon in 2 hours, 19 minutes and 46 seconds.

It is, perhaps, not extraordinary that she won the female division with her time.

It is, perhaps, also not extraordinary that her victory by two minutes over the next female competitor was also good enough to win the Master's category of the race.

But for this mother of three boys, including University of Minnesota, Morris junior Colin Stemper, also a Tinman participant, everything else about Webster's finish is beyond extraordinary.

Three years to the date, in spring 2007, the 55-year-old began treatment for breast cancer.

It started with a routine check-up.

"As soon as I had the mammogram I could tell by everyone's look that the news wouldn't be good. I thought, 'Why would I get cancer? I'm healthy.'"

Indeed she was healthy. In the 1980s, Webster was a well-known athlete in Minnesota, having won the state road cycling championship. And her activity did not stop with cycling. She competed in triathlons as well, including one in 1986 that would be her last before she "retired" to raise three boys.

"It sounds so corny, but you think it's going to happen to someone else," says Stemper about his mother's diagnosis. "When it did happen, it was kind of unbelievable. So it didn't really click for me until she started having surgery and treatment."

The chemotherapy withered Webster's energy and changed her person right before the family's eyes.

"My mom is this little dynamo. [During chemotherapy treatments] she would sit and read the paper for three hours, which really isn't her. She doesn't sit in one place too long."

When treatments ended, the athlete in Webster roared back. By this time, Stemper had become involved in cycling, and he encouraged his mom to race a time trial with him in late summer 2007, which she did.

When Stemper, a political science major, enrolled at Morris in fall 2007, he and Webster set their sights on the Tinman.

In April 2009, mother and son raced the Tinman against each other, but the finish was probably beside the point. Stemper completed the course in 2:24, Webster three minutes behind.

A friendly competition was born anew. Later that year, Webster and Stemper competed in another triathlon, but this time mother was victorious.

“Part of me is just impressed with how she does,” Colin says. “At the same time, I think it’s unique because she can kick my butt. On one hand you want to be nice, but you want to compete.”

Webster wants to win, yes, but she’s grateful for other things too.

“As boys get older you feel there’s less you can do with them. I feel lucky this is something I can do with Colin,” she says.

After finishing chemo treatments in 2007, it might have seemed wise for Webster to rest a while longer before getting into racing again.

“Having breast cancer taught me that you never know how long. That brush with mortality. I decided not to wait.”

Yes, Webster decided, life, and racing against your son, is too extraordinary to wait for.

Editor's note: The University of Minnesota, Morris on-campus [Relay for Life](#) is scheduled for Friday, April 30, 2010.

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