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Off Our Chests:
A Candid Tour Through the World of Cancer
by Dr. John Marshall and Liza Marshall

"*Off Our Chests* offers an unusually intimate and revealing glimpse into the reality of dealing with a cancer diagnosis. At once deeply personal and bracingly universal, this book can offer cancer patients and healthcare workers alike the chance to meet one of life's most devastating situations with a rare sense of mastery and, yes, even hope."

– Katie Couric, television journalist and cancer advocate

"This is a wonderful and engaging book - part memoir, and in equal part an "autopsy" of the cancer establishment in this country. Written with immense care and kindness, it reminds us of how much we've achieved, and how much remains to be done."

– Siddhartha Mukherjee, MD, Oncologist and Pulitzer Prize Winning author of *The Emperor of All Maladies*

Dr. John Marshall used to see breast cancer as the enemy. As a gastrointestinal cancer specialist, he envied the amount of attention other oncologists and medical leaders put on breast cancer, wondering why the cancers he treated—which are the deadliest—were not an equal priority in standard training. He often preached that funding should go to other types of cancer research, hasn't breast cancer had enough? But as he notes, if he had been successful in driving attention away from breast cancer, Liza Marshall—his wife, mother of his two children, and love of his life for 40 years—would be dead.

In their upcoming memoir ***Off Our Chests: A Candid Tour Through the World of Cancer*** (IdeaPress Publishing, April 6, 2021), John and Liza provide an intimate, and sometimes even humorous, look at cancer treatment as husband and wife through the eyes of Liza, the patient, and John, the caretaker. Diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer in 2006, Liza recounts her grappling with the implications of her diagnosis and the difficult decisions about which treatments would give her the best chance at survival, while trying to maintain her everyday routine as a wife and mother. Meanwhile, John found himself having to switch roles from the supportive doctor doing everything in his power to save his patients to the caretaker on

the other side of the desk, wondering how best to support his wife. But as an oncologist, John was keenly aware of the lasting, damaging effects not only cancer can cause, but often worse, the treatments, and after losing his own mother to cancer at 13, he already knew the lifelong grief after a loved one dies.

Woven together through alternating chapters, John and Liza share with the reader raw and unspoken emotions including many that were previously unsaid, even between the two of them, along with the mutual support and love that helped them through the most difficult time of their lives. *Off Our Chests* explores the importance of empathy during a cancer patient's journey, especially the need to understand the positive impact on the patient balanced against the risk of burnout for the medical team. Liza and John also add a unique perspective to our national healthcare crisis of the rising, unsustainable cost of cancer care in the United States. *Off Our Chests* relates the understanding Liza and John each gain of the other's life and an appreciation of what it means to be a cancer patient, a caregiver, an oncologist.

Available for interviews, articles, and Q&A's, John and Liza, through their multiple perspectives, including patient, caregiver, parent, cancer care professional, and cancer care advocate can discuss the following:

- The impact the diagnosis of a life-threatening disease has on one's family, friends and children and how to talk about it with them
- A look behind the curtain at the realities of cancer care delivery
- Intimacy and self-esteem after body-altering surgery and treatments
- John's role changing from doctor to caretaker and back to doctor again, and how this affected each of them and their relationship
- Bringing to the national conversation the causes of cancer, the costs of cancer care, clinical research, and survivorship

"The emotional load of cancer for all those involved is frequently overwhelming," they said in a statement. "We wrote the book to help others learn about what a diagnosis of cancer means for a patient, for a family, for a caregiver, and for an oncologist so that those who walk that path together might find both support and insight to help light the way."

Advanced praise for *Off Our Chests*:

"This book is a must-read for anyone going through cancer of whatever kind. As with so many, I was blindsided by my cancer diagnosis. I felt lost on an unfamiliar field, facing an intimidating

foe. "Off Our Chests" is a captivating and informative playbook for anyone thrown into the cancer game, but it is also a candid story about one couple's experiences with cancer which strongly resonated with me and my own recent cancer journey." – **Ron Rivera, Head Coach, Washington Football Team**

"Off Our Chests is the powerful and deeply personal story of one couple's battle against breast cancer – a couple that happens to include a leading oncologist – told with honesty, candor and humor. Their alternating narratives will engage just about any reader, but for those who face their own difficult diagnoses, this is a sort of *What to Expect When You're Expecting*, an invaluable guide for cancer patients and their families who may be struggling with what comes next." – **Susan Page, Washington Bureau Chief of USA TODAY & Moderator of 2020 Vice Presidential debate**

"An astute and valuable resource for both cancer physicians and patients"- **Kirkus Reviews**

DR. JOHN MARSHALL is the Chief of Hematology and Oncology at Georgetown University and also serves as the Oncology CMO for Indivumed, creating a global precision medicine research network. He is an internationally recognized expert in new drug development for gastrointestinal (GI) cancer, with expertise in phase I, II, and III trial design, with a primary focus on the use of precision medicine in treating cancer. A graduate of Duke University and the University of Louisville, who did his medical and oncology training at Georgetown University, Dr. Marshall is an outspoken advocate for GI cancer patients and the importance of clinical research participation. He established both the Otto J. Ruesch Center for the Cure of GI Cancers and the Precision Oncology Alliance, while directing new ways to study the impact of molecular profiling on cancer research.

LIZA MARSHALL is a retired attorney and community volunteer. She graduated from Duke University with a degree in Public Policy Studies and English and received her law degree from the University of Virginia. She practiced communications law with a focus on the regulation of cellular and local telephone systems with the Washington offices of Hopkins & Sutter and Drinker Biddle & Reath. She has served as the President of the Board of Trustees of Alexandria Country Day School, and as a deacon, elder and Clerk of Session for Georgetown Presbyterian Church. She also helped found Hope Connections for Cancer Support in Bethesda, MD and has served as its Board President. She was also a Jeopardy! champion in 1997. After meeting at Duke University in 1981, John and Liza married in 1984, and have two children. They currently reside in the Washington DC area.

Off Our Chests: A Candid Tour Through the World of Cancer will be released on April 6, 2021 through IdeaPress Publishing and is available for pre-order on their [website](#).

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