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## **Ovarian Cancer Survivor Raises Awareness, Saves Lives During September, Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month**

**Minneapolis, September 4, 2009.** Ogilvie resident Bonnie Lemke is the go-to gal for ovarian cancer in the east central region. After years of having her symptoms dismissed or misdiagnosed, Lemke was finally diagnosed with ovarian cancer in January 2003. Since then she has become a strong advocate for more awareness of ovarian cancer and its symptoms. Bonnie encourages women touched with ovarian cancer and their families to support the cause at Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance's 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Silent No More Walk/Run Sept 12 at Rosland Park, Edina.

Before her diagnosis, Bonnie had been sick for a long time. She visited her clinic frequently with bloating, abdominal pain, incontinence, constipation, bladder issues, acid reflux, excess gas and painful intercourse. It wasn't until her diagnosis four years later that Bonnie discovered these problems were all symptoms of ovarian cancer. The symptoms had never been connected; each was incorrectly blamed on age, menopause, work or stress.

Bonnie immediately became an advocate for ovarian cancer awareness. She states, "I want all women to know the symptoms and to be their own health advocate to prevent the same late diagnosis that I had." For the last several years, during September, National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, Bonnie has written letters to the editors of her local newspapers. While 300 words doesn't seem like much, it's just enough to save lives. Bonnie has received several calls of gratitude from women who were prompted by her letters to get second opinions, go into the clinic, and learn more about ovarian cancer. Ovarian cancer is the fourth leading cause of death among women in the United States.

Bonnie has received tremendous support from Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance. Her first encounter with the organization was a supportive phone conversation with the Executive Director Kathleen Gavin. Bonnie became involved in MOCA's outreach and education programs, Grand Rounds and Survivors Training Medical Students. She also served on the Board of Directors for two years.

Bonnie looks forward to the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Silent No More Walk/Run for Ovarian Cancer on Sept.12. She says, "This is our chance to create greater public awareness, and to unite in the fight against ovarian cancer." Bonnie is now in her 12<sup>th</sup> type of treatment, and remains her doctor's second longest living patient with ovarian cancer. Bonnie was told that her life was coming to an end three years ago, but she kept fighting. "I want all women to have hope, and that is what MOCA provides at the Walk/Run: an overwhelming feeling of hope, support, and togetherness."

The Silent No More Walk/Run for Ovarian Cancer starts at 7:30am Sept 12. Evan Farmer, host of HGTV's Freestyle, will emcee this year's event. Cost is \$25 for adults and \$12 for children age 12 and under.

To register for the Silent No More Walk/Run, or for more information on ovarian cancer, visit [www.mnovarian.org](http://www.mnovarian.org).

**About the Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance (MOCA):**

Celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, MOCA was founded in 1999 by a group of ovarian cancer survivors. MOCA has grown from a group of nine women to an organization of more than 800 survivors and more than 32,000 donors and active members. MOCA is a Minnesota-based nonprofit organization that is dedicated to raising awareness and funding the research needed to detect ovarian cancer early and treat it properly. In nine years, MOCA has raised more than \$2.3 million for ovarian cancer research in Minnesota.