

**Memorial Resolution – Heather Noelle McManamy  
November 30, 1979 – December 15, 2015**

Heather Noelle McManamy was born in West Allis, Wisconsin on November 30, 1979, and died at the age of 36 on December 15, 2015, after a two-and-a-half year battle with metastatic breast cancer. During Heather's employment at UW-Madison she had an indelible impact on colleagues, friends, faculty, and the cancer community in countless ways.

Heather attended UW-Madison from 1998 to 2002 where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Sociology and returned to UW SMPH in 2008 to work as a research specialist for the Institute for Clinical & Translational Research.

Many of the memorial resolutions submitted to this Assembly on behalf of those individuals who have worked and contributed so much to the school have had long tenures at UW-Madison, with equally long lists of academic accomplishments. Heather's life was cut too short for a career's worth of accolades – but the contributions she has made to her colleagues, friends, family, and the Badger spirit are no less impressive.

Heather was diagnosed with breast cancer a few weeks before her daughter Bri's second birthday. After more than a year of grueling chemotherapy treatments and several surgeries, she received the news that she was stage 4 and options for treatment were extremely limited. Despite, or perhaps because of this reality, Heather began tirelessly speaking and educating about metastatic cancer, the statistics associated with survival rates, and the limited amount of research funding. And she did this with uncommon poise, wisdom, passion, and humor.

In addition to spending a lot of time speaking about metastatic cancer research at fundraisers, awareness-building events and on local news; Heather and her family also committed time to LIVING. As utterly dedicated Badger fans, friends connected to the football team were able to help Heather, her husband Jeff and Bri spend some very special moments together in Camp Randall stadium, meeting the players and talking about the game. Upon leaving the locker room after one visit, they were struck by a saying on the wall: "Every Day Matters" – which from that day forward became her mantra.

Fully understanding her terminal status, Heather wrote dozens of letters to Bri, so that she would be able to share her voice and advice at various times during Bri's life: her first day of Kindergarten, her first broken heart, her wedding, and even those events that aren't milestones – but that are made better with a few words of encouragement from mom. She posted her card-writing strategy on Facebook – and it went viral – gaining attention from an international audience and reminding people that "every day matters." The letters and Heather's unique and very special attitude towards life is currently being turned into a book, "Cards for Brianna: A Mom's Messages of Living, Laughing, and Loving as Time Is Running Out."

Writing anything on behalf of Heather is a daunting task, as she had a gift for genuine, honest and heartfelt expression that rivaled the best authors – so the last paragraphs of this resolution will quote from her own words:

"I am lucky to honestly say that I have zero regrets and I spent every ounce of energy I had living life to the fullest...

Please don't think of me with pity or sadness. Smile, knowing that we had a blast together and that our time was AMAZING. I hate making people sad. More than anything, I love making people laugh and smile, so please, rather than dwelling on the tragic Terms of Endearment end of my story, laugh at the memories we made and the fun we had. Please tell Brianna stories, so she knows how much I love her and how proud of her I will always be (and make me sound waaay cooler than I am). Because I love nothing more than being her mommy. Nothing. Every moment with her was a happiness I couldn't even imagine until she came crashing into our world...

And don't say I lost to cancer. Because cancer may have taken almost everything from me, but it never took my love or my hope or my joy. It wasn't a "battle" it was just life, which is often brutally random and unfair, and that's simply how it goes sometimes. I didn't lose, dammit. The way I lived for years with cancer is something I consider a pretty big victory. Please remember that.

From the bottom of my heart, I wish all my friends long, healthy lives and I hope you can experience the same appreciation for the gift of each day that I did. If you go to my funeral, please run up a bar tab that would make me proud... Celebrate the beauty of life with a kickass party because you know that's what I want and I believe that in a weird way, I will find a way to be there too (you know how much I hate missing out on fun). I look forward to haunting each one of you, so this isn't so much a goodbye as it is see you later. Please do me a favor and take a few minutes each day to acknowledge the fragile adventure that is this crazy life. Don't ever forget: every day matters."

Heather is survived by her husband, Jeff, and her 4-year-old daughter Brianna.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Andrea Dearlove, Senior Administrative Program Specialist, Wisconsin Partnership for a Healthy Future*