

Honoring the battle, fostering the hope

Allen: Cancer survivor leads national charge to create monument

By **MISTY DEAN**
Special Contributor

ALLEN — Michelle got married five years ago to Joey Miller, but before their wedding and her college graduation, she had been diagnosed as having Hodgkin's lymphoma, a form of cancer.

"I was a bald bride on chemo," she said.

Since then, the Allen resident has continued to recover while turning an idea to build a cancer monument into a national endeavor to promote awareness, education and research advocacy.

This month, about 32 supporters of the cancer monument in Allen participated in the 15th annual Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation North Texas Race for the Cure to promote the project.

Ms. Miller's mission is to build

the monument, similar to a veterans' memorial, with 60,000 names to honor those who have fought or are fighting cancer.

The Cancer Monument Inc., the nonprofit group Ms. Miller founded, is raising funds through sponsors and donations to build and inscribe names on the monument of individuals, families and companies. The group has collected about 10 percent of the 60,000 individual names needed from 20 states. The donation needed to have a person's name added to the memorial is \$135. Family, corporate or sponsor names range from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

The foundation officially began taking names in 2004, when the Allen Parks and Recreation Department set aside about 2 acres at Allen Station Park for the memorial.

Tim Dentler, director of the Allen Parks and Recreation Department, said if the funds are not raised by 2009, the city might have to move forward with another project. The memorial will cost

about \$7 million to build, and any additional money collected would help maintain the site, Ms. Miller said.

Plans for the circular black granite monument include individual names inscribed on eight freestanding walls with company and family names inscribed on four walls near the fountains. Pathways and gardens surround the monument with plaques to provide cancer education and information. A pillar of light would aid nighttime viewing.

Ms. Miller, 38, also produces and hosts radio programs and writes books, and she is working on a cable TV program.

"My hope is to remove that cultural mindset that you are a victim. We hope to reverse that and say, 'You are a hero' the moment you are diagnosed," Ms. Miller said.

To donate or for more information, visit www.thecancermonument.org.

Misty Dean is a Dallas-based freelance writer.



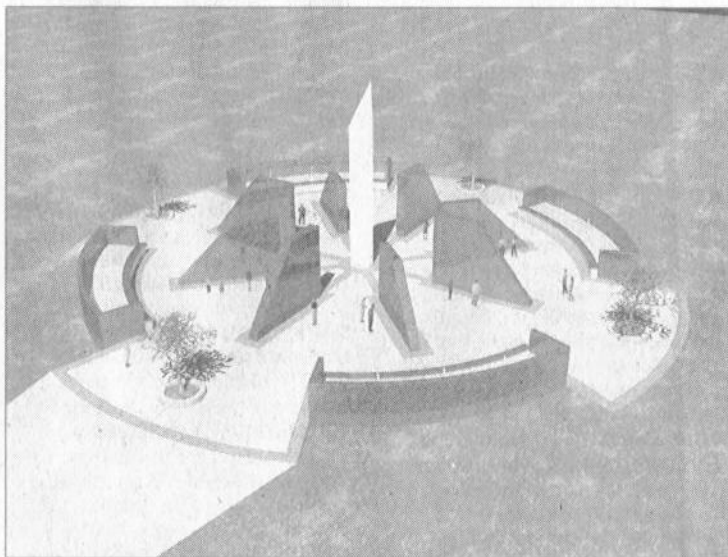
Michelle Miller discussed the cancer monument project before the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure this month.

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Ms. Miller is recovering from Hodgkin's lymphoma.



The monument, which would sit on 2 acres at Allen Station Park, would include the names of those who've had cancer.