

# Prostate Cancer Survivors Speak Their Minds

- Arnold Palmer • Ken Griffey Sr.
- Robin Cole • Pat Robertson and more

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Advice on Options, Treatments,  
and Aftereffects

**Arthur L. Burnett II, M.D.**

Director, Male Consultation Clinic, Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions

**Norman S. Morris**

Foreword by **Senator John Kerry**



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*For Sandy and Rhonice. They have graced our lives  
with love, encouragement, and devotion.*

*—Norman and Bud*

*For my late brother, Myron, physician, humanist,  
philanthropist, and advocate for the needy and infirm.*

*—Norman*



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# *Prescriptive Information*

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# *Foreword*

By Senator John Kerry

If you're opening this book, you or a loved one are probably among the millions of us who got a diagnosis you probably never expected: prostate cancer.

It's jarring. And it's scary.

I guess I always told myself I was pretty indestructible. I'd been in combat as a young man. I'd been face-to-face with some hardened criminals as a prosecutor in Massachusetts. But in 2002, just as I was beginning my campaign to be president of the United States, I faced a very different kind of challenge—I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. The words hit like a swift kick to the mid-section. I was no stranger to cancer, but like anyone else, hearing the word in the same breath as my own name was something I'd never anticipated. Years ago my grandfather died of colon cancer, and in the year 2000 I watched my father, in his eighties, struggle with prostate cancer. This was a battle he too would lose.

My family members' cancers were caught too late, and from these experiences I learned the importance of early testing. In addition, I was lucky to be married to the daughter of a doctor and to have a daughter in medical school. They both consistently reminded me to get tested.

But nothing fully prepares you for that diagnosis.

With the help of my family, friends, and doctors—and the best health care on earth—I beat prostate cancer. I picked myself up and went on. I was lucky.

I learned a lot from my bout with cancer. I learned a little more humility. I learned how many people would get the same diagnosis and wouldn't end up healthy like me because they didn't have good health insurance.

I also learned that when you get that diagnosis you instantly join a fraternity of people you never before realized you were linked to. Bob Dole called me in the hospital. Hamilton Jordan called me. And so did Lance Armstrong. No politics, just people who wanted to help—and to share their wisdom and their example.

That's partly what makes this book special: simply by having battled and survived cancer we are now part of a second "Band of Brothers," and together we'd like to do what we can to help others going through the same scare.

So, given a choice between being scared of cancer and being philosophical about it, I'd rather just be pissed off at cancer and use my anger to do what I like to do—be an advocate and help those who are going through the same thing. What cancer did was open my eyes even more to what was going on around me, and make me that much more determined to help others who aren't as lucky as I was. Survivorship isn't just grace or relief. It comes with responsibility to help others.

And there's a hell of a lot of work to do. According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), in 2008, there were 186,320 new cases of prostate cancer and 28,660 deaths as a result. Prostate cancer is also the most frequently diagnosed cancer and the leading cause of cancer death in men. On a more positive note, more than 90 percent of prostate cancer is diagnosed in what is known as the "local and regional stages" and correlates to an almost 100 percent survival rate in the first five years.

Unfortunately, these gains haven't been shared by all Americans. Significant disparities remain. Mortality rates are more than twice as high among African American men. The closer you look, the more disconcerting the facts become. According to the American Cancer Society's report for African Americans for

2007–2008, black men have a 60 percent higher average annual rate of prostate cancer than white men do. Fewer black men diagnose their cancer early, despite the fact that the ACS recommends that African American men begin annual prostate cancer screening starting between the ages of forty and forty-five.

We need to raise awareness. That—again—is why books like *Prostate Cancer Survivors Speak Their Minds* are so important. A long, long time ago I adopted a personal philosophy after a different kind of struggle: “Every day is extra.” My brush with cancer left me feeling that the best way to truly beat cancer is to make the most of those “extra days”—to live as fully and as fearlessly as I possibly can. Not just to live as if I’d never had the cancer, but to live with the wisdom and resolve I gained from beating it.

Dr. Arthur L. Burnett II, director of Johns Hopkins’s Male Consultation Clinic and one of the leading authorities on prostate cancer, along with Norman Morris, Emmy Award-winning journalist and producer with CBS News and prostate cancer survivor, have written a terrific, thoughtful, and eye-opening book. Before they were coauthors, Burnett and Morris teamed up on another endeavor: curing Norman Morris’s prostate cancer.

Their work will help to bridge the gap between doctor and patient, between science and emotion, and between surviving and living. Let’s hope that the personal stories detailed throughout this book will help to save the lives of those diagnosed—and those not yet diagnosed—with prostate cancer.

I hope that this book, and maybe even the little I have shared about my own experience, will help you or a loved one in your own fight—along with terrific doctors, some prayer, a tremendous amount of support from family and friends, and a little luck.

*Prostate Cancer Survivors Speak Their Minds* is not just an argument for beating cancer by living life fully—it’s also a testament to one man’s triumph and the brilliant doctor who made it possible.

*John Kerry is the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and was the 2004 Democratic candidate for president of the United States.*



# *Acknowledgments*

Bill Moyers once told me that if you get in a car and drive across America you will have a book. My late and good friend Studs Terkel, one of the country's great oral historians, told me the same thing. And when Studs found out I was a prostate cancer survivor, he urged me to go across America and write a book that could help patients better understand the complex disease they were dealing with and so enable them to decide a course of action that would save their lives. The idea excited me. To help just one man make the most important decision in his life was enough to motivate me, but to reach out and help thousands who are diagnosed with prostate cancer represented a challenge I was certainly up for. When I mentioned the project to my surgeon, Dr. Arthur Burnett, he told me not to proceed without him. And so our partnership came to pass.

Trusted friends rallied around. Van Gordon Sauter, former president of CBS News, and Jim Houtrides, a former CBS News senior producer, and his wife, Maureen, were quick to offer encouragement. Bruce Lee, former senior editor of Morrow Books, believed in our mission and showed us the way. Then there were the earthmovers: my wife, Sandy, the sunshine of my life and a wielder of a nasty editing pen; Whitney Erickson, a vice president of American Medical Systems, whose incredible support and backing made our work possible; and Evalyn Lee Bacon, a

protégé at CBS News and now a trusted friend, who helped keep me focused at difficult moments.

Thanks and appreciation go to many others, principally to Dr. Arnon Krongrad of the Krongrad Institute in Aventura, Florida, and Dr. Neil Sherman of the UMDNJ Urology Department in Newark, New Jersey, for offering the names of patients in this book with important stories to tell, and to Dr. Burnett's tireless assistant, Debbie Lassen, for her contributions.

We, of course, reserve our heartfelt thanks to all the patients whose voices are heard in this book, who along with their wives and partners took the time and effort to share the most intimate details of their lives so that others can benefit.

Finally, we applaud all those fine folks behind the scene who make a book like this a reality. A curtain call please for our agent, Faith Hamlin, for her extraordinary work and patience with the authors; for the Wiley editorial team, led by Tom Miller and his right hand, Christel Winkler; and for the marketing, promotion, and sales workaholics whom few of us ever see. Thank you.

## Introduction

If you are a person of a certain age, you may remember some secret words that adults didn't want you to know. One I recall was the C word. In whispers, my mother would tell a friend or relative that Uncle Harry died of "C." When I was growing up you couldn't pry that mystery out of any member of the family. Even the letter "C" conjured up some sort of chamber of horrors. Finally, somebody uttered the word aloud and the genie was out of the bottle.

Today, we throw that C word around without the trepidation of our parents. Cancer is still an ugly word, but here is the good news. More and more, many cancers *can* be cured or controlled. One in particular, prostate cancer, is the focus of this book. Now, caught early enough, the chance that prostate cancer can be "cured" is high. There are caveats, of course, since we are not dealing with an uncomplicated disease, and outcomes from different treatments can vary widely. But the indisputable fact is that over the past several years, though the reported annual incidence of prostate cancer has been rising in the United States, the death rate among prostate cancer patients has been declining due to early diagnosis, constantly improved treatments, and new research.

The aim of this book is not to serve as a medical text, although the reader may want to know some basic facts about prostate cancer treatments. I hope the explanations offered will give

meaning and context to the tales prostate patients tell. These are personal and intimate stories told by courageous men. In one way or another, the individual accounts are as unique as the men who relate them. But there is a common theme. As varied as the men may be, they all speak as one in revealing an optimistic view of life despite what they have gone through or continue to experience. They offer inspiration and hope to the many thousands of men who are now dealing with or will later be compelled to face the dreaded enemy called prostate cancer.

Until about a dozen years ago, “prostate” was not a word in my vocabulary. I was running around covering the news for CBS, and I simply had no time to deal with things like personal health issues. When I was not working, I was at home, helping my wife raise three young boys. There was little time left over to concern myself with much else.

My brush with prostate cancer came surreptitiously, a deadly insurgent, waiting silently for the appropriate moment to attack. It would not be an easy fight, but one I was determined to wage. That is true of the men in this book, and it linked all of us as comrades in a battle against a common enemy. Moreover, it made possible the sharing of stories and otherwise private experiences that we hope will give comfort and encouragement to the many who are facing prostate cancer today. The battles go on. The prospects for survival and good outcomes are excellent and are getting better every day!

The coauthor of this book, Dr. Arthur L. Burnett II, is the Patrick C. Walsh Professor of Urology, Cellular and Molecular Medicine at the Brady Urological Institute at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions in Baltimore. Dr. Burnett, one of the world’s distinguished authorities on prostate cancer, is also director of the Male Consultation Clinic at Hopkins; director of the Hopkins Basic Science Laboratory; director of Neuro-Urology Research; professor of urology and surgery at the Hopkins Medical School; and visiting professor and lecturer on prostate cancer worldwide. He is also renowned for his studies in nitric oxide that led to the discovery of Viagra.

In his role as professor and surgeon at Johns Hopkins, Dr. Burnett exemplifies the highest surgical prostate and urological