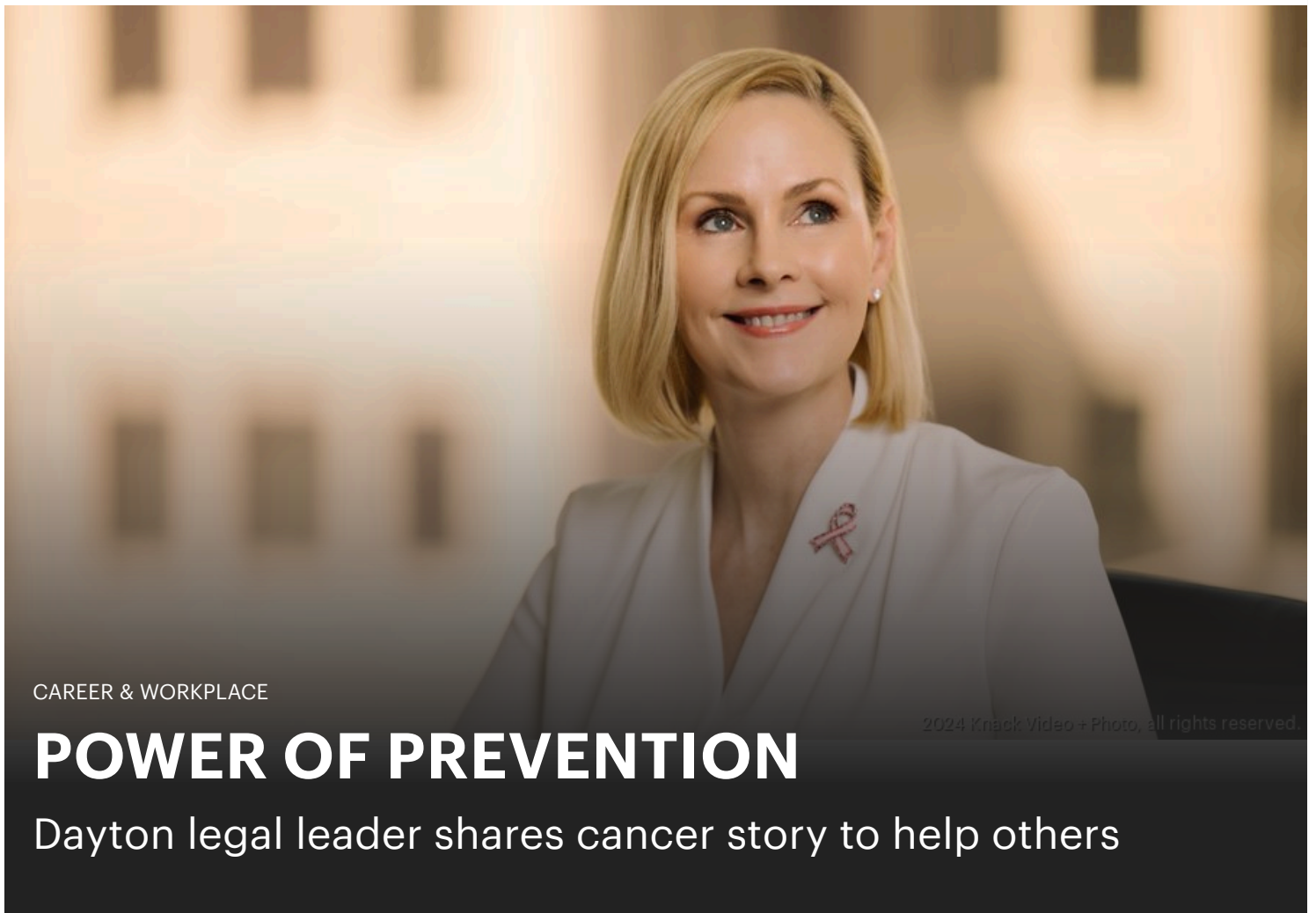


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CAREER & WORKPLACE

POWER OF PREVENTION

Dayton legal leader shares cancer story to help others

Jennifer Hann Harrison is partner-in-charge at Taft Law Dayton.

KNACK VIDEO + PHOTO



By [Hannah Poturalski](#) – Managing Editor, Dayton Business Journal
Oct 25, 2024



Pragmatic. Proactive. Preventive. Prayer. Perseverance. Punctual.

These are life-saving words for many people who take early steps to steer their own health care journey through early detection of diseases such as cancer.

These words also describe Jennifer Hann Harrison, partner-in-charge at Taft Law Firm. She may be one of the most stoic people you will meet.

Even during her own breast cancer journey in 2017, Harrison told very few people what she was going through. Even for years after.

“What I needed most during my cancer treatment was just normalcy,” Harrison said. “But I’ve realized I’m doing a disservice to people by not talking about it. I want people to know it’s not a life sentence; it doesn’t have to be. ... And they also need to hear my story to know that early detection is so important.”

This is where her pragmatism comes in.

For most of her adult life, Harrison has been diligent about annual mammograms and self-checks. Her mother is a two-time breast cancer survivor.

In fact, her cancer would not have been caught early if she wasn’t so punctual.

“It was so small it could not be found on a self-exam,” she said. “If I hadn’t been getting mammograms, it wouldn’t have been caught until either I felt it, or it was symptomatic.”

Harrison was in her 40s when her ductal carcinoma in situ was found. It was then just a stage 0 cancer within a singular duct. Early detection had kept the cancer from breaking out and spreading.

“I could not have been more fortunate,” she said. “I fully believe mammograms should be given early.”

Despite the early detection, Harrison would still go on to have a biopsy, surgery and radiation. She’s been cancer free for seven years.

Jennifer's advice:

- Do your self-checks
 - Talk to your doctor about anything suspicious
 - Do not skip your mammograms
 - Be an advocate for yourself
 - Exercise
 - Proper nutrition
 - Stress management
 - Proper sleep
 - Develop resiliency
-

During her cancer diagnosis, Harrison said what helped her most was keeping her head down and staying busy as a full-time labor and employment attorney. Having hobbies helps too.

It was at home with her husband, Rol, and stepchildren that she acquiesced to a shoulder to lean on. Her husband is a lung cancer survivor.

“You let down your defenses at home, and that’s your place to be afraid,” she said.

At her side was also her Welsh Terrier, Archie, who helped to lower her heart rate and manage stress. And in her heart, was her faith.

“Faith is a very important part of healing; whatever form that takes for people,” she said.

Jennifer's hobbies:

- Working out
 - Golf lessons
 - Artwork - she was an art major before switching paths
-

In the years after cancer, Harrison said she's become "hyper focused" on her health. She maintains her annual mammograms.

She supports the American Cancer Society, which provides resources such as transportation and a cancer helpline.

"Focusing more on health is a positive that can come out of it, and just a new appreciation for being alive," she said.

Jennifer Hann Harrison

Age: 54

Job: Partner-in-Charge, Taft Law Dayton

Residence: Kettering

Husband: Rol

Doggie: Archie

Past boards and committees: Dayton Art Institute, American Cancer Society, Cox Arboretum Foundation, Dayton Area Logistics Association, Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce, others

College: West Chester University, Pennsylvania

Law school: Dickinson School of Law, Pennsylvania

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