

She's a real survivor

Continued from 9A

bons.

"I was the only one without a pink ribbon," she said.

Massey began chemotherapy the week before Thanksgiving. She and her doctors opted not to use radiation chemotherapy, but to do it by injection.

She said it was not too bad. The procedure left her cold and shivering for several hours. It also took over two hours for the medication to be injected through her hands.

Most white women are worried about hair loss, Massey said but it didn't concern her. She wears her thick black hair natural.

Massey knew about the loss of appetite and the other changes her body would undergo. Her nails turned dark brown.

"You can always make lemonade," she said. "When my nails got dark, I just wore darker nail polish. When I lost my hair, I just wore my scarves even more. I still wanted to my bald head to show though. I figured if it was good enough for Michael Jordan, it was good enough for me."

Massey still remembers distinctly the day her hair came out. She was sitting on the couch by herself. Every time she ran her hand through her hair, handfuls would come out.

"I remember thinking where are my friends," she said. "I am sitting here going bald and no one is at home."

After her chemotherapy, which ended February 2, Massey was ready for the next step, choosing prosthetic breasts or implants.

A local plastic surgery clinic harassed her, she said and even went as far as to schedule an appointment to have

implants. Massey made it clear she didn't want silicone implants.

"I didn't want those things," she said, laughing. "I like the way I am. I can be any size I want to be. I can take a blouse and make my chest fit."

The only problem she has is with the color of her prostheses. They are not, she maintains, the correct shade of brown. She will never forget the feeling of looking in a book to find perfect breasts.

"They really don't make enough shades," she said. "For African American women, there is little or no choice on color."

It has been almost a year since Massey's surgery and she is ready to begin the next phase — telling people about her experience and starting a support group for other African American women. There is much black women need to know about breast cancer, she said. Since she talked about her mastectomies at church, several women have come up to share how they survived the surgery.

She also wants to address the color issue in prosthetics for women of color.

Massey survived because of her faith and friends like Don Kincaid, a leukemia survivor who gave her a book on cancer that answered many of her questions.

Her hair has grown back and she proudly shows off her natural hairdo.

She looks back over the last year with wonder and appreciation.

"I believe my life was spared for a reason," she said. "I survived to tell everyone that Jesus is good."

Wedding Celebrations



Ricks

Davenport-Ricks

John M. Davenport and Nia Genese Ricks were married on Sept. 21 at First United Presbyterian Church.

The bride is the daughter of Dr. Carole B. Ricks and Alvin A. Ricks. She is a graduate of Wake Forest University and is an accountant with Remington Arms.

The groom is the son of John M. and Alene Davenport. He is a graduate of N.C. State University and is an engineer with the Department of Transportation.

The couple will reside in Winston-Salem.

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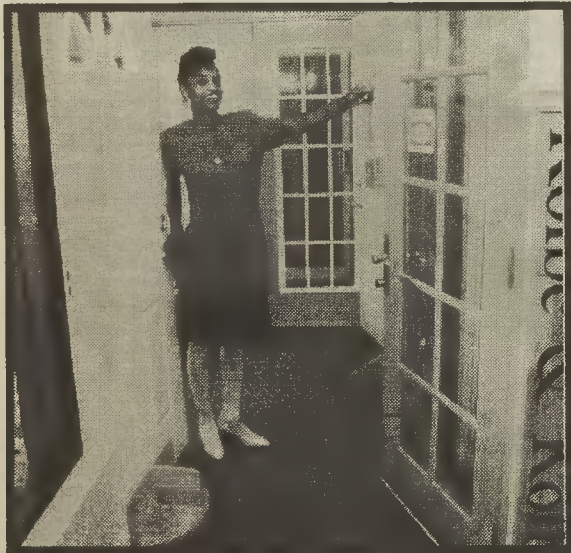
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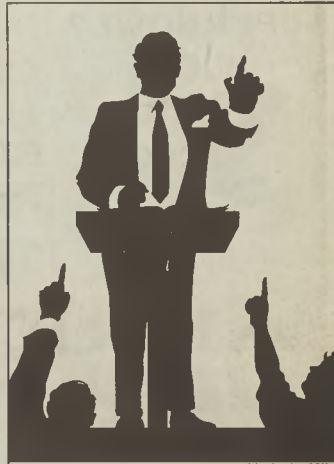
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