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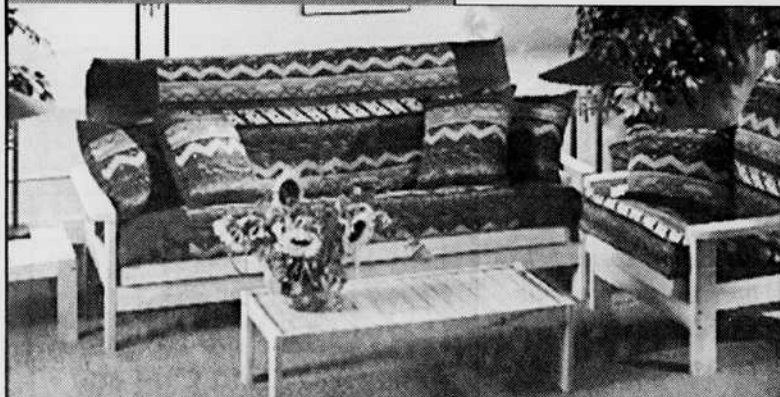
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SCIENCE HEALTH

Local writer to speak about breast cancer

Patricia Armstrong, a University graduate, will read selections from her new book

By Megan Turner
Higher Education Editor

It's been five years since Patricia Mees Armstrong was diagnosed with breast cancer. Although she was given only months to live, she lives today to tell her story. In honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the University graduate and author will give a benefit reading from her new collection of poems, "Daring to Dance, Refusing to Die" on Tuesday.

"College women can't say, 'Okay I don't have to worry until my doctor says I can have my first mammogram,'" Armstrong said. "Younger women are getting [breast] cancer because there is a tendency to pat women on the head because it's too soon. Younger women should be more aware."

The way Armstrong promotes awareness to those who don't think they are targets for breast cancer is by talking about it. Since her diagnosis in 1992, she has written several books of poetry and prose. She also has held sev-

eral readings to "get the word out."

Armstrong, who was a teacher in Eugene public schools for 18 years, has also been honored with several awards for her writing. The Willamette Writers Organization presented her with a first-place award for her fiction piece titled "The Hat," and her story "The Beekeeper" was also recognized with a cash award. "The Hat" also brought her to the finals of the Writers' Workshop contest in Asheville, N.C.

Armstrong, along with her husband of 42 years, Richard, has traveled extensively around the world, as well as within the United States. She has three sons, all of whom are University graduates. She is also 11 times a grandmother.

At Tuesday's reading, Armstrong will accept tax-deductible donations to benefit cancer research. She will also offer signed copies of her books, and the proceeds will go to combating cancer.

Her reading will be at the Sacred Heart auditorium Tuesday at 7 p.m. It's free and open to the public.

"She's not supposed to be [alive]," Richard Armstrong said. "But it'll seem like she's been there for 50 years."

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