

federalism and the Clean Water Act.

92 Judith Cross Painter, an eighth-grade geography teacher at Andrew Lewis Middle School in Salem, Virginia, was selected as a Gilbert M. Grosvenor Teacher Fellow by National Geographic and Lindblad Expeditions. Painter will join 39 other highly respected educators from the United States and Canada as they embark on global expeditions on board Lindblad Expeditions ships for hands-on experience for pro-



Alexandra Dapolito Dunn ('89)



Judith Cross Painter ('92)

fessional development. Painter was chosen for the expedition to Antarctica.

93 Jamie Eanes Meals 4 Home, a service that prepares pouched meals people can boil to have a hot, made-from-scratch dinner. ♦ Kevin Tucker, chief executive officer of Virginia Beach, Virginia-based SOLitude Lake Management, is heavily involved in his company's volunteering and outreach program, The SOLution, through which staff are encour-



Valerie David ('90) empowers audiences nationwide with her story of overcoming cancer.

Channeling her inner 'Hulk'

BY DANICA FEUZ ('18)

A two-time cancer survivor, Valerie David ('90) has been traveling the country to perform her one-woman show *The Pink Hulk: One Woman's Journey to Find the Super-hero Within*.

"When I was diagnosed in 1999 with non-Hodgkin lymphoma, I had to put on my warrior hat, my armor and fight," says David, a Virginia Beach native who now makes her home in New York City. "But when I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2014, I decided this time I'm doing cancer on my own terms."

David turned to writing as a creative outlet, knowing that she had to undergo chemotherapy and radiation treatments and lose her hair again. She channeled those emotions and wrote the entire script for *The Pink Hulk* in six months.

"It's not a 'poor me', 'why me' story. It's really hilarious. It's a pillar of strength and vulnerability."

At JMU, David was an English major with a minor in communication. She was a writer for *The Breeze* and a member of Sigma Kappa sorority. The summer of her junior year, she went to London with a JMU study abroad program centered around the liberal arts, theater and writing. She credits this program for helping her choose her major and discover her passion.


Post-graduation, David joined the American Academy of Dramatic Arts' two-year acting school. She imagined her career unfolding on Broadway or in a TV series, but that was when she received her first diagnosis.

"I was experiencing chest pains, and I went to see a doctor who happened to also be an oncologist," says David. "But I never thought it might be cancer. It was New Year's morning when I got the call that the mass in my chest was malignant."

David credits *The Pink Hulk* for helping her realize that she can face adversity head on, look at death in the face and say, "I'm not ready yet and you're not going to take me yet."

The show has had a profound effect on audiences, too. Two friends confessed to David that *The Pink Hulk* inspired them to quit their jobs to pursue different careers. Others have confided that the show encouraged them to be brave in their own bouts with cancer. "People have reached out to me when they've started radiation and asked me to send 'hulk strength,'" she says.

Now cancer free, David continues to travel and share her story, including helping nursing students understand what cancer patients go through.

In the future, David hopes to take the show international and continue writing plays. For more, visit pinkhulkplay.com. 



(L-R): Tri-Sigma ladies Karen Ahrens Wheatley ('80), Lisa Phillips Yingling ('81), Terry Taylor Wadsworth ('81), Hilary McCabe Bierly ('82), Lindy Graham Bochnak ('80) and Lisa Headley Hart ('81) enjoyed a sunny Homecoming 2017.

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