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## A Lifelong Fighter's Toughest Round

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Even her detractors acknowledge that Patricia C. Dunn, the person at the center of [Hewlett-Packard's](#) spying scandal, is one tough woman.

At age 12, she lost her father. She later dropped out of college to support her mother. Dunn nevertheless rose to the rarefied upper ranks of the mostly male finance industry. She ousted the former HP chairman and chief executive -- another tough woman -- and assumed the chairman's seat. Dunn fought bitterly with others on HP's board, and despite her avowed preference for privacy, has gained notoriety for backing a rigorous hunt that included accessing private phone records to smoke out the source of news media leaks from the board.

This week, the 53-year-old former HP chairman faced another major blow: She found out she has a recurrence of advanced ovarian cancer the day before the California attorney general charged her and four others with fraud and conspiracy in the corporate leak probe.

Circumstances required Dunn to be self-reliant from an early age, her friends and business associates said, and her diligence and willingness to learn delivered her from poverty to the top echelons of business. That same tenacity and conviction may have provoked the ire of her enemies on the HP board, who say her strong sense of mission -- plug the leak -- led her down an unethical path.

Now she must rely on that same tough quality to survive her two-front battle. She surrendered to authorities yesterday and, after a three-minute court hearing in which she agreed to return Nov. 17 for her arraignment, was released on her own recognizance. Today she will begin chemotherapy for her fourth bout with cancer. She has

survived not just ovarian cancer, but also melanoma and breast cancer.

"She's strong," said Alison Davis, who for three years served as chief financial officer when Dunn was chief executive of Barclays Global Investors. "People can be threatened by a strong woman who represents a challenge to their will," she said. "She will stand up to defend herself."

Dunn's personality earned her her number one critic, venture capitalist Thomas J. Perkins, who pinned the blame for the investigative tactics on her, calling it "a Pattie Dunn program, 100 percent."

Sources close to Perkins and his friend and fellow HP board member George A. Keyworth II say the deep rifts between Dunn and Perkins provoked a witch hunt focused on trying to get Perkins and Keyworth off the board.

Dunn, in turn, shot back. "I won't indulge in a chronology of the intimidation, pressure, rudeness and criticism that Tom directed at me, but I will simply say that I have never had remotely similar experiences with anyone," she wrote in an Aug. 17 letter to members of the HP board. The personality differences were "compounded by a fundamental difference in philosophy between me and Tom" about corporate governance, she wrote.

Members of Congress last week hammered Dunn for not accepting responsibility for an overzealous leak investigation, and for failing to heed red flags that the investigation was moving into unethical and potentially illegal territory. Among other things, documents showed that Dunn had authorized a surveillance and sting operation designed to trace the e-mail, phone and in-person communications between reporters and board members.

On Tuesday, the day before her indictment, Dunn was told her Stage 4 ovarian cancer had come back. Still, she's maintaining a tough front. An e-mail she sent to several friends yesterday morning said she found out she'd been indicted while shopping for a suit at Nordstrom's.

Dunn called her new diagnosis a nasty surprise and said that the state attorney general now considered her "a public threat," said John C. "Sandy" Walker, a close friend who has worked as the architect for her two houses. But, she joked, she was engaging in "retail therapy," and talked about her upcoming interview on the CBS News program "60 Minutes."

"She's been through some extraordinary treatments" for her various cancers, Walker said, "but every time she says, 'But I'm fine.' "

Dunn's older sister, Debbie Lammers, said that toughness was forged in her early years.

"What we've been through since we were small children has put her in good stead to deal with these current circumstances," said Lammers, who talks to Dunn every day. "She is determined, she is focused, she is steady."

Their father, Henry Dunn, a Las Vegas entertainer, was a gregarious and upbeat businessman who preached the stiff upper lip, Lammers said. He was 25 years older than their showgirl mother, Ruth, and he died when Patricia Dunn was 12. That left the girls and their infant brother with their bereaved mother, who was isolated from other family support.

Dunn nevertheless always appeared pretty and poised, and was elected to the student council her senior year, a role she took so seriously she read the handbook of rules after she was elected, said Barbara Rosenberg, her honors English teacher at Terra Linda High School in San Rafael, Calif. Dunn absorbed books so quickly that Rosenberg got special permission to expand her reading assignments to college-level literature, and Dunn often talked about her desire to pursue journalism, she said.

"This is a student you never forget," said Rosenberg, who keeps in touch with Dunn. She attended Dunn's wedding, her 50th birthday party and her Christmas parties.

Dunn's academic career was interrupted because her mother was overwhelmed by financial and emotional problems, forcing Dunn to

drop out of the University of Oregon. She finished her degree by commuting on three buses to the University of California at Berkeley, according to a life history Dunn provided to the Congress during her testimony last week.

Dunn has been married for 25 years to William W. Jahnke, whom she calls "the best husband in the world," and helped raise his four children from a previous marriage.

Although Dunn's rise to the top job at Barclays made her one of a small group of female business executives, she has never championed herself as a role model for women. Her sister said Dunn never thought of herself as fitting the typical profile of a hard-nosed businesswoman.

"You may find this hard to believe, but I have never been ambitious for career success," Dunn told an audience gathered last month to honor her induction into the Bay Area Business Hall of Fame. In fact, she fell into the financial services industry almost by mistake; a temporary secretarial job at Wells Fargo Investment Advisors turned into a permanent one, and she abandoned her dream of becoming a journalist.

HP's former chairman and chief executive Carly Fiorina disputes Dunn's portrayal of herself in a memoir, "Tough Choices," to be published Monday. Dunn called for board meetings behind Fiorina's back and presided over the key meeting during which the board fired her, Fiorina wrote. When Dunn suggested Fiorina and the company "position" her firing as a personal decision to move on, Fiorina said she believed "truth is always the best answer," Fiorina wrote.

Dunn's breast cancer was first diagnosed in September 2001, and her medical treatments forced her resignation from the top job at Barclays the next year. She has since had three lumpectomies and radiation therapy for breast cancer. She also has undergone surgeries to remove separate cancers, including a malignant melanoma on her face, and for the ovarian cancer earlier this year.

"When we were kids, we didn't think we had all these problems, because it wasn't in us to complain," Lammers said. "At the time we

didn't think it was so tough, but looking back on it, it really was." It is that training that has produced the fighter in her sister. "What we're seeing now," she said, "is the best of Pattie."

*Staff researcher Richard Drezen contributed to this report.*