

Insider

BY MARY MURRAY

Call to Compassion

Laura Linney is more than a talented film, television, and stage actress. She's also a fierce advocate for cancer research. She stood by her father, playwright Romulus Linney, during his fight against lung cancer and shed new light on the disease as the executive producer and star of the Showtime series *The Big C*. On January 26, she will share her journey at the **H.O.W. Hearing the Ovarian Cancer Whisper** annual luncheon at The Mar-a-Lago Club in Palm Beach. Linney spoke with *PBI* about her acting career and how portraying a terminal cancer patient affected her outlook on life. (561-406-2109, howflorida.org)

PBI: Your father was a prolific playwright. How did his career influence your theatrical aspirations?

Linney: As much as I would love to take credit for my own interest in the arts, the reality is that my father was a huge influence. He was also inspiring. I learned from him how noble, brave, and vital a life in the arts could be, and also how challenging and frustrating. What became clear through his example was that the love for the work itself has to outweigh all else.

Reflecting upon the array of characters you've played, is there one who remains close to your heart?

There are a few characters whom I am especially fond of. It's impossible for me to choose just one. Wendy in *The Savages* I loved for her flaws. Clara Kinsey in *Kinsey* I loved for her capacity to love. Abigail Adams I loved because, well, she was Abigail Adams. And Mary Ann Singleton in Armistead Maupin's *Tales of the City* I loved her desire to find a life filled with like-minded people, to find her family.

In *The Big C*, you played a character fighting cancer. How did you prepare to portray the emotional struggles of dealing with disease?

Instead of concentrating on the emotions that come with the prospects of dying, I thought a lot about the question of how does a person die well? We spend a lot of time and money on living well, but what can we do to die well? To have a good death is, I think, a part of having a good life. I kept that on the forefront of Cathy's mind during the four seasons of the show.



JOAN MARCUS



LINNEY DISHES ON THE DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN ACTING FOR STAGE AND SCREEN
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