

Beck/Smith Hollywood

Celebrity news from Marilyn Beck and Stacy Jenel Smith

Jul 26

'Design Star's' Leslie Ezelle a Walking Testimony to Resilience

Hollywood Inspirational, The Hollywood Exclusive by Marilyn Beck and Stacy Jenel Smith



Leslie Ezelle, tearing through the competition on HGTV's addictive "Design Star" interior design competition show, has already won acclaim and fans — and is a walking testimony to the power of human resilience.

Ezelle, a beautiful blond 43-year-old former Dallas Cowboys cheerleader, fought a two-year battle with breast cancer that included a string of serious infections following six weeks of radiation, and six surgeries. At the same time, she and her family were struggling with financial problems in the wake of the stock market crash. But then, just four months after her last surgery, she tried out for "Design Star" — on which she's been impressing the heck out of judges and viewers alike.

"It's so crazy now, looking back on it. Cancer was not on my 'To Do' list. I don't do pink," she says scoffingly. However, "When you reach rock bottom, that's that's when you ask the soul-searching questions — 'What do you want to be when you grow up?'" She wanted her own design show. "I really, really pushed myself. I wanted to get busy living. It was the best thing I could ever have done, and thank God I had the courage to do it, to put my craziness out there on national TV."

Leslie and wife Libby (married in Massachusetts when the state legalized same sex unions) have a blended family of two daughters and two sons, and she admits, "It was a hard decision to be away from my kids so long to do 'Design Star.' But I want to tell them, 'Go for it, go for your dreams' having done it myself. Now is the fun part. We had a benefit for Susan G. Komen — they were really there for me," she goes on, speaking of the extremely active breast cancer charity organization. "We raised \$25,000. We had this little private viewing party. You would have thought it was like Hollywood, baby! The kids got all dressed up in little outfits and had their friends over. Oh, my God. I'm like Beyonce now. But I turn back into Mommy when I make them mad."