

**VAL  
SKINNER**  
1960-



**GOLFER  
FIGHTS  
BREAST CANCER  
FOR A FRIEND**

In 1993, LPGA golfer Heather Farr died at age 28, after a four-year struggle with breast cancer. According to close friend and fellow LPGA golfer Val Skinner, the tour pulled together like family in ways no one had ever seen. Skinner soon realized she had a new mission in life – to provide a much-needed stronger message to caution young women about the disease.

Val Skinner was born in October 1960 in Hamilton, Montana. A golfer at age four, Skinner won her first golf title three years later. She was the Nebraska Junior Girls champion in 1974 and 1978 and the High School State champion in 1976 and 1978. As a senior, she captured twenty high school titles.

At Oklahoma State University, she was the 1980 and 1982 Big 8 Conference Women's Golf Champion, 1982 Big 8 Conference Outstanding Female Athlete of the Year, and 1982 NCAA All-American. As a senior, she captured titles at five of the six events she played. In 1982 she joined the Ladies European Tour, winning four tournaments. The next year she joined the LPGA Tour adding six more victories. She earned \$2.5 million over a 21-year career.

Farr's death inspired Skinner to create the Val Skinner Foundation, which has raised \$13 million for scientific research, as well as early-detection and comprehensive education programs. Skinner didn't do this just because Heather Farr died of breast cancer. She was motivated to take action because of who Heather was as a person – before cancer ever came into her life, and after she fought it gracefully. "She's our beacon," Skinner said.

The LIFE (LPGA Pros in the Fight to Eradicate Breast Cancer) Center, founded in 2000, has raised more than \$8.5 million for Susan G. Komen for the Cure, the LPGA's official national charity, and the Cancer Institute of New Jersey, a National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer facility.

"I'm constantly reminded of our LIFE heroes, honorees who share their stories of perseverance in battling breast cancer. I think of Heather daily and know she is cheering us on to help women who are still struggling to survive. Her memory is why we continue the fight."

In 1997, Skinner was selected as one of USA WEEKEND Magazine's five Most Caring Athletes in recognition of her humanitarian efforts to raise awareness to fight breast cancer. In 2003, she was one of 25 individuals honored by Yoplait, the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and SELF Magazine for her fundraising. That same year she received the Horace M. Kallen Award from the American Jewish Congress.

Val Skinner, a member of three golf Halls of Fame, has devoted as many years raising money to fight breast cancer as she played professional golf. In 2005, Skinner received the Charlie Bartlett Award from Golf Writers Association of America, for her unselfish contributions to the betterment of society. "I'm so happy golf has allowed me to be a part of something bigger than any sport will ever be," Skinner said.