



Public Trustee Candidate

Gwen Darien

Professional Experience

- Executive Vice President for Patient Advocacy and Engagement, National Patient Advocate Foundation (NPAF)
- Executive Vice President of Programs and Services, Cancer Support Community
- Director, The Pathways Project
- Executive Director, Samuel Waxman Cancer Research Foundation
- Director for Survivor and Patient Advocacy, American Association for Cancer Research

Additional Information

- Chair, Community Engagement in Genomics Working Group
- Member Secretary's Advisory Committee on Genetics, Health and Society
- Advisory Board, Sarah Lawrence College Health Advocacy Program

Biography

Ms. Gwen Darien is a longtime patient advocate who has played leadership roles in some of the country's preeminent nonprofit organizations. As Executive Vice President for patient advocacy and engagement, Ms. Darien leads programs that link NPAF's patient service and education programs to NPAF advocacy and engagement initiatives, with the goal of improving access to affordable, equitable quality healthcare.

Called "a bit of a renegade" by *People* magazine, Ms. Darien has long insisted on pushing boundaries while maintaining a safe space for patients. As editor and publisher of *Mamm*, a magazine for women with breast or reproductive cancer, Ms. Darien published features on previously taboo subjects, such as dating after a mastectomy, along with the more expected academic features on news and policy analysis. Her media leadership was recognized by the Avon Foundation, which honored her as one of "the most powerful women in breast cancer."

As a three-time cancer survivor herself, Ms. Darien came into cancer advocacy expressly to change the experiences and outcomes for the patients who came after her and to change the public dialogue about cancer and other life-threatening illnesses. With these goals in mind, in 2005 she started the first standalone advocacy entity in a professional cancer research organization at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), causing outside observers to note the organization's "progressive commitment to patient advocacy." At AACR, she launched *CR* magazine—a magazine for people with cancer and those who care for them. Later, she served as Executive Director of the Samuel Waxman Cancer Research Foundation; Director of The Pathways Project; and Executive Vice President of programs and services at the Cancer Support Community. In each role, Ms. Darien championed placing patients at the center of health system change, whether for research, public policy, or direct services.

Ms. Darien serves on a wide range of program committees and workshop faculties. She is the Chair of Community Engagement in Genomics Working Group of the National Human Genome Research Institute and Co-Chair of the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute's Patient Engagement Advisory Panel. She is a member of the National Cancer Policy Forum, National Institute of Medicine. Ms. Darien also writes about her experiences as an advocate and cancer survivor. A recent piece, "Transformation: My Experience as a Patient and an Advocate in Three Chapters," appeared in the *National Academy of Medicine Perspectives*.

Ms. Darien is a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College, where she also served as an advisor for the Health Advocacy program.