



# PATRICIA BLANC

## FRANCE

Ms. Patricia Blanc has twenty years' of experience in a major French bank, specializing in audit, strategy, development, project management, and human resources. With a rich international experience, including residencies in South Africa and New-York, she co-founded the "*Imagine for Margo: Children without Cancer*" non-profit association in 2011 after losing her daughter, Margaux, to an aggressive brain tumor at the age of 14. During her disease, Margaux raised over 100,000 euros to fund research and left three powerful words in her notebook, which are the guiding ethos of the association: Go, Fight, Win. *Imagine for Margo* has raised and allocated 20 million EUR to 60 research projects to accelerate innovations for paediatric cancer in Europe, directly benefiting more than 7,000 children. Patricia plays an active advocacy role and closely collaborates with French and international leading organizations to advance paediatric oncology research and catalyze investments in this field. She serves on various committees, including the European Cancer Plan's Monitoring Committee, ACCELERATE Steering Committee, ITCC Advocates and Brain Tumor Committees, CCI Europe and SFCE's Scientific Council.

Patricia Blanc received the Vanity Fair Award for the 50th Most Influential French People in the World and the French National Order of Merit for her leadership as the President of *Imagine for Margo*.

**Go,**

**Fight,**

**Win!**

## On Relationships that Influenced My Career

The journey of *Imagine for Margo* owes much of its trajectory to the unwavering support and guidance of Professor Gilles Vassal, Gustave Roussy Comprehensive Cancer Center in Villejuif, France. In the nascent stages of the association, Dr. Vassal stood as a beacon of knowledge and mentorship, generously sharing insights into paediatric oncology, research methodologies, the critical need for medications, funding needs, and the intricate landscape of mobilizing stakeholders. Twelve years ago, the landscape was daunting with many barriers, particularly from industry and regulatory entities, hindering progress.

Dr. Vassal, acting as a mentor, equipped me with the tools to navigate this complex terrain and to become an active advocate for childhood cancer research and support, both at the national and European levels.

Pivotal in shaping the course of my life and career was the steadfast presence of my husband. Our union marked a paradigm shift in my professional aspirations, transitioning from a trajectory in auditing and finance in France to a path of global exploration and advocacy. Together, we made pivotal career decisions, drawing strength from the foundation of our relationship. Our shared spirit of adventure led us to embrace expatriate life, immersing ourselves in the vibrant cultures of South Africa and New York. Through his unwavering support and the ethos of daring to defy boundaries, I embraced a mindset of boundless exploration, recognizing the transformative power of embracing diverse perspectives and experiences, enriching not only our lives but also those of our children.

## On Challenges and Overcoming Them

I had honed my skills in audits and investment banking operations. Amidst the familiar rhythms of work and the camaraderie of colleagues, a profound

turning point awaited, inspired by the memory of my daughter. Despite my deep-rooted expertise in finance, I made a monumental decision to plunge into uncharted territory.

With no prior knowledge of paediatric oncology or the intricacies of research and no advocacy experience, the path ahead seemed daunting. Yet, fueled by the belief that change was imperative for all children battling cancer, I forged ahead. The resounding echo of Margaux' message inspired me to "Go, Fight, Win!".

This mantra became a steadfast reminder of the inexorable determination that guided my steps. Despite the uncertainties, I embraced the challenge, propelled by the conviction that every action, no matter how daunting, held the potential to make a difference. Margaux' words encapsulated the essence of our mission, urging me onward in the pursuit of transformative changes for children facing the scourge of cancer.

*Imagine for Margo* supports paediatric oncology research, notably through our "Children without Cancer" races. Drawing inspiration from our experiences in New York, where we engaged in many charitable events, organizing these solidarity races felt natural. Despite strong skepticism we received in France, we persisted in our vision. Twelve years later, the impact speaks volumes. Last year the association saw high participation rates and shattered fundraising records, with approximately 7,000 runners and over 2.7 million EUR raised by *Imagine for Margo*. With the development of solidarity races in collaboration with organizations in Luxembourg, Belgium, and Spain, our goal is to collectively allocate 10 million EUR each year to the same European research projects selected by our shared Scientific Committee and selection process. Our perseverance underscores the power of collective action in realizing our mission to combat childhood cancer.

## On Balancing Career and Other Life Responsibilities

Amidst our demanding professional endeavors, my husband and I steadfastly prioritize our family and cherished moments with loved ones. These shared experiences infuse me with boundless energy and drive, fueling my pursuit of personal and professional ambitions. Embracing activities like running marathons together further strengthens our bond and reinforces our commitment to a balanced, fulfilling life. Ultimately, this philosophy, centered on family, love, and holistic well-being, resonates as the true measure of success for me.

## My Words of Wisdom for the Next Generation of Female Leaders

To my younger self at 25 years of age, I would advise not to hesitate in pursuing passions and chasing dreams. While initially studying law with aspirations of becoming a judge, my journey led me to discover a passion for finance and audits during my undergraduate years. This diverse foundation paved the way for a fulfilling career, marked by international experiences in South Africa and the United States. Twelve years ago, the decision to pivot once more, leaving behind familiarity to establish and lead *Imagine for Margo*, was driven by an unwavering commitment to fighting childhood cancer.

In the realm of oncology, childhood cancers pose unique challenges. Despite the inadequacies in medications and resources, there is an imperative to relentlessly pursue solutions while remaining deeply empathetic towards affected families. In this context, the human aspect is essential, especially in a situation of very poor prognosis cancer. Balancing the rigors of this battle with selfcare and cherishing moments with loved ones becomes essential. Remembering to nurture personal passions and finding joy outside work serves as a vital anchor amidst the demanding landscape of fighting cancer.

My daughter's inspiring message, found in her

notebook after her death :

- Go: take the opportunities that come to you, and do not miss a chance to follow your dreams.
- Fight against all the hard moments that will come to you.
- Win, accomplish the things you want, follow your dreams and always try to be a better person.

Both I and the *Imagine for Margo* association live with this message daily.