

# ★ Cancer victim's mother rips D.C. bureaucracy

Continued from Page 1

"I was hoping I would just be right there, that I would make a trip and say 'This is what's happening' and everybody would say 'Oh, OK.' I was very naive, but I was hoping that would happen," she said in an interview on the sidewalk outside the White House.

Mrs. Stiewing's message is two-fold — that most cancers have environmental causes and can be prevented and that doctors should pay more attention to alternative cancer therapies. Too little money, she said, is being spent to clean up hazardous waste dumps and other environmental cancer-causing agents.

But she said that even though she did not change the minds of federal cancer officials to pay more attention to prevention and alternative treatments, she is not giving up.

"This will be a life-long thing for me. I will always do this. I know I will," she said. "When I think of all the other kids that are dying I can't stop.

Mrs. Stiewing said that concern — that other children are dying the way

her Amber died — is keeping her going.

"I don't want to do this at all, I don't even want to be doing this. I'd rather be romping in the park over there," she said, looking over at her husband and their 2-year-old son, Toby. "But if I don't do it, who else will? How many other people are going to die?"

She said the next step in her mission will be to go to New York.

"I've come to Washington for the politics end, but I'm going to New York City for the economic end — that is the economic capital," she said. "I'll be paying to the United Nations and to different television networks, just strolling up and down 5th Avenue and Madison Avenue, making my point there."

She said she also plans to write to world leaders, urging them to wage war against cancer and its causes.

"I'll be appealing to them," she said. "Hopefully one of them will say 'I care, tell me about it.' I know there is somebody out there that's going to say, 'I care, tell me.' I'm just hoping I can find that person. I'll keep searching until I do."

Mrs. Stiewing decided to do something about cancer as her daughter lay dying in 1980.

She took pictures and films and made tapes of their conversations, all of which was used to help her right a book about Amber's last days.

So far, Mrs. Stiewing said, she hasn't been able to get the book published.

"I have sent it to every major publisher, to every single literary agent. I've contacted TV, radio, newspapers, national organizations, everybody, and I've got practically zero response," she said.

"I think what's doing it is the fear people have of cancer, and they've got good reason to be afraid. But my basis is not to scare them but to educate them," she said.

Mrs. Stiewing said individuals can help protect themselves against cancer by fighting to improve the regulation of environmental and occupational cancer-causing agents, by eating more fiber, by avoiding unnecessary X-rays and by avoiding cancer-causing chemicals.

She also recommended that people, if possible, avoid living near hazardous waste dumps and factories that produce cancer-causing agents. Americans living in an industrial society should not be complacent, even if they take those steps, she said.

"How many more people are going to die needlessly?" she said. "I was thinking to myself, I wonder if mankind is going to die from nuclear war, or from cancer. I hope it doesn't come to that. That's why I'm out here."

