

Elizabeth Edwards

- Senior Fellow, The Center for American Progress
- Successful Author
- Advocate for Children's Causes

A passionate advocate for children and an accomplished attorney, Elizabeth Edwards has been a tireless worker on behalf of important social causes.

Mrs. Edwards is currently working with the Center for American Progress as a Senior Fellow, working on healthcare issues and contributing to the Wonk Room, the Center for American Progress Action Fund's newly-launched, first-of-its-kind policy rapid-response blog. "Elizabeth is a woman of extraordinary talent, knowledge, and grace," said John Podesta, President of CAP and CAPAF. "She has proven herself to be one of the most effective, tenacious, and caring spokespeople for progressive policies in the country."



The daughter of a decorated Navy pilot, Mary Elizabeth Anania was born on July 3, 1949. In her early years, she attended school in Japan, where her father was stationed with a reconnaissance squadron, flying missions over China and North Korea.

As an undergraduate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Mrs. Edwards majored in English. She went on to study American literature but then switched to law, graduating from UNC Law School in May 1977.

Mrs. Edwards possesses an accomplished legal background. Following law school, she clerked with U.S. District Court Judge Calvitt Clarke, Jr. in Norfolk, Virginia. She worked for the North Carolina Attorney General's office in the early 1980s, where she did work for the Department of Natural Resources and Community Development and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act.

From 1984 to 1996, Mrs. Edwards worked at the Raleigh law firm Merriman, Nicholls, and Crampton. In the early 1990s, she taught legal writing as an adjunct instructor at UNC Law School for two years, and in 1996-97, she was a member of the first group of Public Fellows at the College of Arts and Sciences at UNC.

Mrs. Edwards is committed to serving the community and expanding educational opportunities for all children. She volunteered with the Parent Teacher Associations at her children's schools, and has been active in their youth soccer leagues in several roles.

Additionally, she volunteered at Goodwill Industries, working in the book room of their thrift store.

In 1992, Elizabeth Edwards co-established the Vincent J. Anania Lacrosse Scholarship in honor of her father, a former lacrosse player and Assistant Coach at UNC-Chapel Hill. In 1996, she helped to establish the Wade Edwards Foundation, and helped to build a computer learning center - the Wade Edwards Learning Lab - for youngsters in Raleigh. Recently, the foundation opened a similar computer lab in Goldsboro. The Wade Edwards Foundation also runs a statewide short fiction contest for North Carolina's high school juniors, awarding \$10,000 a year in scholarships and grants to high school English programs.

In addition to her many accomplishments, Mrs. Edwards has inspired countless women through her willingness to publically share her battle with breast cancer through her book "***Saving Graces: Finding Solace and Strength from Friends and Strangers***," a memoir of her trials, tragedies, and triumphs, and of how various communities celebrated her joys and lent her steady strength and quiet hope in darker times.

Mrs. Edwards is the proud mother of four children: Catharine, Emma Claire, and Jack. Her first child, Wade, died in 1996. Despite the demands of raising two young children, Mrs. Edwards still finds time to participate in community service. She remains active in the Wade Edwards Foundation, and is involved in a variety of charitable efforts, including fundraising for the March of Dimes benefit. She also serves on several boards, including the UNC Board of Visitors and Books for Kids.