It is because of her courageous determination and inspiring countenance that the nurses and staff at Cleveland Clinic nominated her for the 2011 Cleveland Clinic Courage Award. Brandee Kelly will be presented with the award at the 2011

CLEVELAND, OH – January 12, 2012 – Cleveland State University's Brandee Kelly thought the pain she felt in her lower back during the start of games in her first season might just be due to the grind of a Division I women's basketball career. Intense pain sent her to the emergency room where a battery of tests revealed abnormal growths in Brandee's back, pelvis and leg. After seeing the images, head team physician, Susan Joy, MD of Cleveland Clinic Sports Health, arranged a biopsy of Brandee's pelvic bone and referral to an oncologist.

Cleveland Clinic oncologist Brad Pohlman, MD shared with Brandee the news that the pain was being caused by the mass in her back, which was lymphoma, a type of blood cancer that affects cells of the immune system. In her case, it was found in her bone marrow, and it was

spreading throughout her body.

Lymphoma found in young patients can be aggressive and deadly. Treatment would require an intensive regimen of chemotherapy but there was hope for a full recovery.

Brandee said at first she was devastated. She could not understand why a young, active woman would have cancer. But the somberness didn't last long. The winning spirit that led her to be valedictorian of Beaumont High in St. Louis and a prized recruit for the Vikings defined her cancer treatment.

Accompanied by family members, she began the first in a series of chemotherapy that would span four months. Brandee battled through the side effects, intense nausea, vomiting, fatigue and hair loss. Each time she finally began to feel better, she would return to the clinic for another round of treatment.

She said she has always been a positive person. Her cancer experience was a test of that attitude, and she did not waver. Brandee missed only a few weeks of school and even returned to take final exams, passing them all.

For her final treatment, with her prognosis for beating cancer seemingly strong, Brandee's Cleveland State teammates and coaches joined her as she rang the ceremonial bell at Taussig Cancer Institute. The bell gives notice to everyone in the building that a patient has completed a final treatment session. It also signaled to Vikings fans that a healthy, cancer-free Brandee Kelly would be returning to the floor for her sophomore season.

It is because of her courageous determination and inspiring countenance that the nurses and staff at Cleveland Clinic nominated her for the 2011 Cleveland Clinic Courage Award. Brandee Kelly will be presented with the award at the 2011 Greater Cleveland Sports Awards on Thursday, February 2nd at the Renaissance Cleveland Hotel. The Cleveland Clinic Courage Award honors exceptional student athletes who have faced a medical challenge in his or her life and approached the situation with courage and determination to get back in the game.

Presented by Medical Mutual and FirstMerit Bank, the Greater Cleveland Sports Awards is the biggest sports show in Northeast Ohio, honoring the best and brightest of the area's amateur and professional sports. This star-studded event will be hosted by Erin Andrews, ESPN Sideline Reporter and College GameDay anchor and features fine dining, sports celebrities and auctions that benefit the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission. Other awards and recognitions will include the High School Athlete of the Year, Collegiate Athlete of the Year, Amateur Athlete of the Year, Professional Athlete of the Year, Lifetime Achievement Award, 2011 Best Moment in Cleveland Sports presented by Horseshoe Casino and the Cleveland Clinic Courage Award.