

Katie Couric Honors Alex Trebek on *Jeopardy!*

When Katie Couric, 64, became *Jeopardy!*'s first-ever female guest host on March 8, her turn at the podium (where she'll remain for two weeks) marked one of the few things she hasn't done on TV. "It was my first game show!" she says. Couric admits the job ended up being a lot harder than it looks. "It is very complicated," she says. "It requires a lot of multitasking." It also helped a great cause. *Jeopardy!* matched the contestants' winnings during her tenure and donated the money to Stand Up To Cancer, designating it for pancreatic cancer research. "I did that in honor of Alex," she says of iconic host Alex Trebek, who succumbed to his cancer battle in November. "He is so missed."

How did it feel to be a *Jeopardy!* host?

So much fun! The team behind the scenes are amazing. I think it's still very difficult for them to move forward after Alex's death. You can feel him in every square foot of the place. He was so beloved.

Did people tell you stories about working with him? Everyone, from the women who helped with hair and makeup

to the audio engineer. The stories they told felt like an opportunity to get to know him

Breaking the Mold
"I was a nervous wreck!" says Couric of guest hosting the show. "There's a lot that goes into it."



"*Jeopardy!* celebrates knowledge. What's better than that?" Couric says.

better and appreciate him more than I already did. In the final stages of his illness, he was so courageous and in a great deal of pain, but he kept going. It's a real testament to his commitment to the show.

What does the show mean to you? I love that it celebrates intelligence, and it's educational yet

entertaining. It makes me feel better about our country when I see how smart the contestants are.

Do you watch it with your own family? I used to watch it all the time with my late husband [Jay Monahan, who died of colon cancer at 42], who was really good at it. I also watch it now with my current husband [John Molner], but it holds a special place in my heart because Jay loved it so much. He would have been a good contestant.



REMEMBERING MY SISTER & ALEX

In 2001 Couric lost her sister Emily, then 54 and a state senator in Virginia, to pancreatic cancer—the same disease that claimed Alex Trebek in 2020, at 80. "It was so special to be able to raise awareness and money for the disease that took them," she says.

You're also using the platform to raise cancer awareness. As COVID lifts, I hope people talk to their doctors about cancer screening, since early detection is so critically important. If you're 45 or over, you should be getting your first colon cancer screening. That goes for women too. It's the second-leading cancer killer of men and women combined, with about 53,000 deaths annually. So this was really special for me. It was kismet in terms of doing something that was on my bucket list and being able to do good for cancer research. It was a real twofer. — GILLIAN TELLING