

Promise

SUMMER 2009

A publication for friends of M. D. Anderson



Hope Grows Resilient Rose Reflects Survivor's Journey

Bush Endowment for Innovative Cancer Research Marks a Milestone

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To celebrate his 80th birthday, former President George H.W. Bush prepares for a parachute jump with a member of the U.S. Army Golden Knights. Most recently, the former Navy pilot marked his 85th birthday with a tandem jump June 12 near his summer home in Kennebunkport, Me. Photo by Mark J. Burns

MILESTONES AND A MISSION

Bush Endowment Supports 10 Years of Scientific Discovery

By DeDe DeStefano

Former President George H.W. and Barbara Bush are all about celebrating milestones. From fundraising birthday bashes to co-chairing M. D. Anderson's 60th anniversary, they've been involved in raising money to help others for decades.

Their philanthropic activities often involve world leaders and major entertainers. They sometimes include a bit of thrill seeking on the part of President Bush. In 1999 and 2004, he found himself jumping out of a "perfectly good airplane" (according to Mrs. Bush)

during fundraising events to help those dealing with cancer and other challenges.

Now, M. D. Anderson celebrates a milestone made possible by the Bushes' commitment to cancer care. June 2009 marked the 10th anniversary of the George and Barbara Bush Endowment for Innovative Cancer Research — a fund that has been instrumental in helping M. D. Anderson scientists provide proof that their creative ideas work and move their findings from the laboratory bench to patient care.

Approximately 3,300 people helped launch the Bush Endowment at a June 1999 gala celebrating President and Mrs. Bush's 75th and 74th birthdays, respectively. M. D. Anderson continued raising funds for the Bush Endowment through the institution's 60th anniversary event in November 2001 and 41@80, a celebration of President Bush's 80th birthday in June 2004. The three efforts raised more than \$50 million for the Bush Endowment and have helped fund the work of 16 physicians and scientists.

By primarily supporting basic science, the Bush Endowment fills a critical gap in the research funding process. Before making a grant, agencies such as the National Institutes of Health require a kind of evidence called "proof of concept." With Bush Endowment "seed funding," M. D. Anderson scientists can develop that evidence and press on with their investigations. Such innovative research has produced a tremendous amount of information about the genetic and molecular abnormalities that lead to cancer. Using this information, scientists are working to determine which is the driving force in an individual's cancer and then develop a personalized treatment that targets that abnormality.

Four of the 16 Bush Endowment recipients are focusing on immunological approaches that harness the patient's

immune system to fight the disease. To develop powerful immunotherapies, these researchers and their colleagues are forming collaborations to translate findings from basic immunology research into clinical trials for such cancers as melanoma, lymphoma and leukemia. The Department of Immunology also plans to expand this research to treatments for sarcoma, prostate and breast cancers. Immunotherapy has the potential not only for treatment of disease, but also for prevention of recurrences due to the immune system's ability to "remember" the antigen. In addition, it could be used as a preventive measure for healthy people who are at high risk of developing certain cancers.

Nicho Bourque is proof that personalized cancer medicine holds tremendous promise. Bourque visited her dermatologist in Lake Charles, La., in August 2007, when a mole on her right hand under her middle fingernail began to grow larger. When the biopsy came back positive for a rare type of melanoma, her dermatologist strongly suggested she go to M. D. Anderson.

Merrick Ross, M.D., professor of surgical oncology, performed surgery, working closely with plastic surgeons to save Bourque's finger. But one month



Nicho Bourque

later, tests found that the melanoma had grown deeper than thought, and Ross amputated her finger to the first joint.

Bourque and her husband, Trent, returned to M. D. Anderson every four months for scans to determine whether the melanoma had spread. In August 2008, tumors were found in her lungs.

Presidential Perspective

Ten years after the George and Barbara Bush Endowment for Innovative Cancer Research was established, former President George H. W. Bush offers perspective on the endowment, the research it funds and the patients it ultimately serves.

What does it mean to know that a fund bearing your name will last in perpetuity, making a difference for those dealing with the challenges of cancer?

It's hard to explain, really. It's a wonderful honor. Barbara and I have had a lot of things named for us — everything from an airport to sandwiches. But this fund ranks at the top.

What are your hopes for the Bush Endowment?

We hope what everyone involved with cancer hopes, that the fund will allow researchers and doctors to bring us closer and closer to — if not curing cancer — then making it a disease we can live with.

Why do you commit your time to M. D. Anderson, and how do you find the time?

It's been an honor for Barbara and me to be associated with the best cancer center in the world. It was our personal connection to cancer that first drew us to M. D. Anderson years ago, but as we learned more about it, we realized it truly is the disease people fear most. So finding the time was easy. Besides, we don't do any real work. We are just sort of cheerleaders.

What would you say to the patients who have benefited from the discoveries you've helped make possible through the Bush Endowment?

I would say they are very, very lucky to have walked through the doors of M. D. Anderson. It is a place of miracles, and we are just happy to play a tiny role.

Her oncologist, Nicholas Papadopoulos, M.D., professor of melanoma medical oncology, gave her several options for treatment. Bourque asked, "If I were your daughter, what would you choose for me?"

Bourque had two rounds of interleukin-2, a natural protein that stimulates T cells in the body, but that alone did not work. Papadopoulos asked if she'd be part of a clinical trial using her body's T cells to fight her cancer. Bourque agreed.

Some T cells (tumor infiltrating lymphocytes, or TIL) have the ability to specifically recognize melanoma antigens, or markers. That discovery has led to the development of adoptive cell transfer (ACT) protocols for patients with metastatic melanoma, enabling a patient's immune system to fight tumors. While these TIL heroically attempt an attack on tumors, in most cases the tumors win out because the tumor environment suppresses the efforts of the TIL. Scientists have found that if they harvest T cells inside a patient's melanoma tumor after surgery and grow them to great quantities, they can boost the individual's immunological army enough to overpower the tumor.

Following Bourque's lung surgery, investigators from the Department of Melanoma grew T cells removed from her

tumor for six weeks. The T cell count had to reach 40 million in the first stage before she could receive the treatment. It doesn't always happen.

"For the first few weeks, we prayed and prayed for the T cells to reach the minimum number. When we finally reached that milestone, we were overjoyed," says Bourque.

Bourque spent two and a half weeks at M. D. Anderson receiving T cells, chemotherapy, high dose interleukin-2 and dendritic cell therapy — another milestone. "The addition of a vaccination step to existing ACT therapy has been shown to significantly enhance anti-tumor responses in mice," says Patrick Hwu, M.D., chair of the Department of Melanoma Medical Oncology and a recipient of Bush Endowment funds. "Nicho is the first human to receive her own dendritic cells, mixed with a melanoma antigen, in combination with the T cells. Dendritic cells are the most potent antigen-presenting cells known and have a great capacity for activating TIL. When they come in contact with T cells, they activate the cells and induce their proliferation. We're thrilled about the potential this combination therapy holds for patients."

Bourque was thrilled as well at the scans taken after her T cell treatment.



After waiting weeks for her T cells to grow, Nicho Bourque, pictured with husband Trent and their children, from left, Marae, Raley and Reid, learned that her infusion was set for Jan. 30, the same day Trent's former baseball buddies at McNeese State University had organized a surprise benefit for her. Photo courtesy of Nicho Bourque

"Our results were amazing," she says. "The tumors had shrunk dramatically."

From the start, Bourque told her husband that it was important to "do this so that I can help others."

"I know I'm going through all of this for a reason," she says. "The message I want others to know is that they can beat this. It's doable. And it is important to live every day like it's your last."

Maybe that's why jumping out of a perfectly good airplane can make sense.

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iPromise



Andrew McCullough Jr. of Houston is chair-elect of the Advance Team, an advisory board dedicated to raising awareness of the Children's Cancer Hospital at M. D. Anderson.

My mother was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 1995 and died in 1997. While she was at M. D. Anderson, I felt a strong connection to the institution. I've come to realize, after talking to other families who've been to M. D. Anderson, that there's this incredible bond with the people there, whatever the outcome. I cherish this institution, where the whole idea is hope. My mother's doctor found her cancer by chance, and it was already Stage IV when she was diagnosed. Prior to her passing, we created a fund in her name, the Bettyann Asche Murray Distinguished Professorship in Ovarian Cancer Research at M. D. Anderson. I wanted to raise money for ovarian cancer research to help improve detection methods and survival rates, which at the time were not very good and have gotten only slightly better. It's a steep, uphill battle. We'll get there, though slowly.

Do you promise? Tell us why you're committed to Making Cancer History®.

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A Message From Dr. Mendelsohn



In 1999, George H.W. and Barbara Bush celebrated their birthdays with family, friends and the nation at an event that raised more than \$10 million to launch the George and Barbara Bush Endowment for Innovative Cancer Research at M. D. Anderson. Five years later the Bush Endowment exceeded its \$50 million goal.

In this issue of Promise, we extend 85th birthday wishes to the former president and our ongoing appreciation for the Bushes' commitment to M. D. Anderson.

We also salute all who have supported the Bush Endowment over the past 10 years. In uncertain economic times, the endowment capital

remains a long-term, secure source of revenue for the future, while interest funds provide seed money for research projects destined to change the way we treat cancer.

The Bush Endowment underscores philanthropy's critical role in M. D. Anderson's research effort. Your continued dedication and generous support are inspirational in the face of difficult economic conditions that affect us all.

With thoughtful input from faculty, administrators and staff, the institution has implemented a strategy to recover Hurricane Ike-related losses, weather the nation's recession and prepare for a strong future. With heartfelt gratitude, we remain watchful stewards of each gift to the institution, however large or small. Together, we will sustain the resources necessary to maintain M. D. Anderson's leadership role and continue our mission to eradicate cancer.

Cyrus Scholar Award Presents a Golden Opportunity

As Suzanne and Jim Cyrus of Bartlesville, Okla., reflect on their 55th anniversary this past June, they say their golden years are all the more golden thanks to a recent surprise arranged by their four children.

The Cyrus Scholar Award for Outstanding Clinical Research in honor of James S. and Suzanne Cyrus was announced at M. D. Anderson in April. The couple presented the scholarship to Aarif Khakoo, M.D., assistant professor in the Department of Cardiology. On hand were 17 family members scattered across four states, including Michael Cyrus, Linda Thomas, Esq., Mark Cyrus and Scott Cyrus, M.D.

"Our children have honored us in so many ways during their lifetimes," says Jim. "To have an award named in our honor is certainly not something we would have ever expected, but it's a unique and wonderful gift. Suzanne and I are proud of our family and very humbled to be a part of the unbelievable work being done at M. D. Anderson."

At the award ceremony, Michael Cyrus of Tampa, Fla., spoke on behalf of his siblings: "It was with great respect, love and honor that we established this award in the name of our mother and father. We are proud to help extend your lifelong commitment to, as you would say, Dad, the 'simple but not always easy act of giving'."

The Cyrus family has a long tradition of philanthropy and community service. In 2005, Michael and Mariet Cyrus established the Cyrus Family Endowment to promote the development of basic and clinical research skills in internal medicine. With the support of the Cyrus family and matching gifts, it's grown to approximately \$267,000. The family plans to continue funding the endowment in hopes of hitting a goal of \$1 million.

The endowment provides two competitive awards, each for \$15,000 (\$5,000 each year for three years) to an outstanding basic/translational researcher and a clinical researcher. Judges include Raymond DuBois, M.D., Ph.D., provost and executive vice president, and Robert Gagel, M.D., head of the Division of Internal Medicine.

Sushovan Guha, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition,



Suzanne and Jim Cyrus witness the presentation of the Cyrus Scholar Award for Outstanding Clinical Research, recently named in their honor, with 17 family members from four states on hand. Photo by Maggie Newell

received the 2009 Cyrus Scholar Award for Outstanding Basic Research in Honor of Archie Lester, father of Mariet Cyrus.

Jefferies Randall & Dewey Commits to Match CPRIT Grants



By providing matching funds for grants to M. D. Anderson through a state initiative approved by Texas voters in a 2007 constitutional amendment, the annual Jefferies Randall & Dewey A&D Summit is helping M. D. Anderson in its mission to eliminate cancer.

This year's 13th annual oil and gas industry conference in April at the Houstonian Hotel, Club & Spa, along with the ninth annual Charity Golf Invitational at Redstone Golf Club in conjunction with the A&D Summit, raised more than \$272,000 for M. D. Anderson. Each year Jefferies Randall & Dewey, the energy investment banking group at Jefferies, underwrites the events and gives all proceeds from admission fees and other donations to

M. D. Anderson. More than 330 registered for this year's summit.

Jack P. Randall, Jefferies Randall & Dewey co-founder and an M. D. Anderson Board of Visitors member, initiated the unique fundraiser in 1997. From now on, he says, proceeds will be used as matching funds for grants awarded by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas. Funded through earnings generated by \$3 billion in general obligation bonds, CPRIT will provide up to \$300 million in competitive grants for cancer research and prevention programs annually. CPRIT grants are contingent upon matching funds, which may come from philanthropy, federal grants and other sources.

"Contributions raised by this and future A&D Summits will help provide the matching dollars needed to make CPRIT grants a reality for M. D. Anderson," says Randall. "CPRIT requires recipient institutions to match 50 cents for every dollar it grants. That means a \$500 gift could thus have a \$1,500 impact," he says. "Through the years we've been very proud to support M. D. Anderson, which has continually leveraged these contributions to maximum benefit, growing their impact well beyond face value as start-up money for innovative research projects and ultimately boosting the institution's ability to secure millions in federal and state funding."

Eugenie N. Kleinerman, M.D., head of the Children's Cancer Hospital at M. D. Anderson, accepted the contribution on the institution's behalf. Since its inception, the A&D Summit has raised more than \$4 million for research and patient care initiatives at M. D. Anderson.

Access ANSWERS

To become a patient at M. D. Anderson:
Call 1-877-632-6789
or fill out the self-referral form at www.mdanderson.org.

Palm Beach Outreach



M. D. Anderson hosted several educational opportunities throughout the nation during the past year, including events in Indian Wells, Calif.; Aspen, Colo.; El Paso and Palm Beach, Fla. A March symposium in Palm Beach, for example, offered the latest information on cancer research and patient care programs at the institution. Speakers included Raymond N. DuBois, M.D., Ph.D., provost and executive vice president; Raymond Sawaya, M.D., chair of the Department of Neurosurgery; and Patrick Hwu, M.D., chair of the Department of Melanoma Medical Oncology. Among the nearly 200 in attendance, from left: Steve Wasserman, Board of Visitors member-at-large; Susan Polan; Patrick Mulvey, M. D. Anderson vice president for development; and Laurie Martuscello. Photo by Lucien Capehart Photography

Sprint for Life: Off and Running in Support of Ovarian Cancer Research

Inspired by two ovarian cancer patients and their desire to fund an ovarian cancer research program at M. D. Anderson, Judith K. Wolf, M.D., a professor of gynecologic oncology, came up with an idea and ran with it.

Wolf founded the Sprint for Life 5K Run/Walk and Sprint for Sprouts Kids' Run in 1998 with support from her patient, Laura Lee Scurlock Blanton, and from the family of Sandra G. Davis.

Over the past 12 years Sprint for Life has surpassed Wolf's expectations, raising more than \$2 million toward innovative ovarian cancer research for the Blanton-Davis Ovarian Cancer Research Program at M. D. Anderson. Approximately 2,500 people registered for this year's record-breaking event in May, which grossed \$385,000 — including more than \$129,000 from online pledges.

Marcy E. Kurtz and Marcy L. Rothman served as this year's event chairs, with honorary co-chairs Kelli Blanton and Eddy Scurlock Blanton Sr.

Activities included a parade for children 12 years and younger leading them to the start line for the Sprint for Sprouts events.

A reception area and breakfast welcomed ovarian cancer survivors attending the event,

and a post-race party featured an awards ceremony, food, music, face painting and kids' games. A host of volunteers from M. D. Anderson and throughout the community contributed to the successful event.

"This race is about celebrating the survivors, raising awareness and supporting research to find better therapies and ultimately a cure," says Wolf, a seasoned runner who participates in each Sprint for Life as a tribute to Blanton, who died in 1999, and to honor the 22,000 women diagnosed with ovarian cancer in the United States each year.

Wolf is co-director of the Blanton-Davis Ovarian Cancer Research Program at M. D. Anderson, which was created in 1996 as a critical step toward the goal of eradicating ovarian cancer. It was the nation's first formal, comprehensive ovarian cancer research effort aimed at translating basic discoveries into improved therapies and management of the disease.

For information on Sprint for Life and the Blanton-Davis Ovarian Cancer Research Program it benefits, please visit www.mdanderson.org/sprintforlife or call 713-792-2765.



Judith K. Wolf, M.D., left, and colleague Kathleen M. Schmeler, M.D., assistant professor of gynecologic oncology, head for the finish at Sprint for Life in support of the race to beat ovarian cancer. Photo by Kimberly Willis

Polo on the Prairie Brings World-Class Polo to West Texas

Thunderstorms rolled across the West Texas prairie for two days, but the rain didn't dampen the spirits of polo enthusiasts and M. D. Anderson supporters May 2 as Polo on the Prairie celebrated a record year.

Event chairs Melinda and Henry Musselman welcomed more than 1,050 guests, who raised an impressive \$270,425 for M. D. Anderson's

patient care and research programs. This year's event topped last year's record of \$252,948.

By midafternoon, long lines of vehicles stretched along the winding dirt road leading to the Musselman Brothers' Lazy 3 Ranch near Breckenridge, making their way to the field. As if on cue, the sun appeared just an hour before the championship match.

For the first time in the event's 23-year history, the championship match was tied at the end of the fourth chukker. A sudden-death tiebreaker resulted in victory for the team No Trees. One of the team's star players, K.C. Beal, was born the year of the first Polo on the Prairie, and she has attended the event each year. Her father, Kelly Beal, has played in numerous Polo on the Prairie events, for the past four years playing with his daughter.

After the match and a barbecue feast, guests danced to the rhythm of rising country star Jack Ingram. Fireworks lit the sky to end the evening.

Since 1987, Polo on the Prairie has raised more than \$3.9 million for programs at M. D. Anderson. The event combines professional and amateur polo, and players travel nationwide to participate, bringing several horses each at their own expense.

Henry Musselman serves on the institution's Board of Visitors, along with his mother-in-law, Mary Anne McCloud, who is Polo on the Prairie's chair emeritus.



The show goes on despite the threat of rain as Polo on the Prairie 2009 brings professional and amateur players to a ranch in West Texas in a record-breaking fundraising effort. Photo by Eli Gukich



AMONG FRIENDS | Jeff Wigbels

By Sarah Watson

Jeffrey L. Wigbels has lung cancer. But thanks to a collaborative, personalized approach to patient care and research at M. D. Anderson, the senior vice president for wealth management at Smith Barney in Atlanta describes himself as just about the luckiest guy in the world.

Wigbels credits his doctor, Roy S. Herbst, M.D., Ph.D., professor in the Department of Thoracic/Head and Neck Medical

Oncology and co-principal investigator of an

innovative set of clinical trials called BATTLE (Biomarker-based Approaches of Targeted Therapy for Lung Cancer Elimination), for keeping his cancer at bay.

In the summer of 2006, however, Wigbels was feeling far from lucky. On the day before the birth of his second child, he received the devastating diagnosis of adenocarcinoma non-small cell lung cancer. Anticipation and joy

turned into shock as Wigbels sensed his world suddenly falling apart.

Wigbels recalls thinking, "This can't happen to me." A nonsmoker and long-distance endurance athlete, he was otherwise in top condition and had no family history of cancer. He and wife Tiffany had a two-year-old daughter, Ava, and they were expecting son Jack via a planned Caesarean section within 24 hours.

Donor Wages Personal Battle Against Lung Cancer

Wigbels kept the news to himself that day, a Friday, weighing the implications on his life and the future of his growing family through a haze of conflicting emotions.

On Saturday, he continued to wrestle, mentally and physically, with all that it means to have cancer as he helped his wife deliver their son.

On Sunday, Wigbels found the words to tell her.

The following week was a whirlwind of medical appointments and tests. When an Atlanta-area oncologist suggested a regimen of "heavy" radiation immediately followed by chemotherapy, Wigbels questioned the standard of care he was being offered. He sought a second opinion — and a more individualized approach — at M. D. Anderson.

In Houston, Wigbels learned more about his condition — nonsmoker's cancer, Stage IV, with metastasis to the abdomen and chest wall. He met with Herbst and James D. Cox, M.D., head of the Division of Radiation Oncology. Wigbels carried along a photograph of his two babies — his reason for seeking the best care available.

"I'm an analyst, a planner, by trade," he says. "I was going to find the best."

Wigbels' initial treatment was a combination of chemotherapy and the drug Avastin®. Later Herbst identified Wigbels as a candidate for one of the BATTLE clinical trials, which are designed to improve the choice of therapy for each patient by matching drugs to the molecular aspects of his or her tumor.

Wigbels remains under Herbst's care, though currently not as a part of the study, and goes about his life.



Jeff Wigbels and wife Tiffany, together with children Jack and Ava, savor life as he benefits from an individualized approach to treating his Stage IV lung cancer.

Photo courtesy of Jeff Wigbels

"I have the chance to live many more years because of the knowledge and expertise of my doctor," says Wigbels, who recently established a fund to support Herbst's research. "The more he can learn about biomarkers, the more everybody can benefit."

This is a story for everyone with cancer, not just those with lung cancer, he says, holding a photograph of Ava and Jack playing outside on a sunny day.

"I live for this," says Wigbels, pointing to their smiling faces. "I'm alive because of this."

Wigbels encourages others to join him in his "battle" against lung cancer by contributing to the Wigbels-Herbst Cancer Research Fund at M. D. Anderson. A cadre of "generals" — friends, family and colleagues — is spreading word of Wigbels' personal campaign through events in the Atlanta area and elsewhere. He hopes to create a program aimed at high school students, and in turn their teachers and families, to promote awareness of lung cancer and the need for research such as that going on through BATTLE.

Herbst's research is important in that it could be a model to apply to all cancers, says Wigbels.

"By taking a look at what makes me work on the inside, he's making it happen for everybody," he says. "People with cancer will live longer because of this work."

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Survivors Say

James S. Olson

I had cancer. I have cancer. I will always have cancer. M. D. Anderson has been a part of my life since 1981 when I registered there as a patient and entrusted to them my future. ... The future of oncology glows with hope; new therapy upon new therapy will attack cancer at the level of its genetic abnormalities, steadily disrupting and disabling the cell's legion of pathways until the disease, like tuberculosis and pneumonia, shrinks into a manageable malady.

— Cancer survivor and author James S. Olson, in "Making Cancer History: Disease & Discovery at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center" (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009)

Promise invites cancer survivors to share their reflections. E-mail Promise@mdanderson.org.

Stand Up To Cancer Empowers 'Dream Teams'

A "dream team" from M. D. Anderson, Harvard University and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center will intensify efforts to target a mutated molecular pathway that fuels endometrial, breast and ovarian cancers, thanks to a three-year, \$15 million Dream Team grant awarded by Stand Up To Cancer, a program of the Entertainment Industry Foundation.

The grant will fund the study of PI3K, the "most common abnormally activated pathway in all of cancer," says Gordon Mills, M.D., Ph.D., chair of M. D. Anderson's Department of Systems Biology, director of the Kleberg Center for Molecular Markers and a co-leader on the project.

The team will use its combined cell line studies, animal model research and data from Phase I clinical trials to identify potential biomarkers that will indicate whether a drug will work for specific groups of patients. Clinical trials, based at M. D. Anderson, will test the validity of candidate biomarkers. Mills expects the first Phase II clinical trial, for endometrial cancer, to open within the year.

Another Stand Up To Cancer-funded Dream Team, designed to advance epigenetic cancer therapy, will draw on the expertise of Jean-Pierre Issa, M.D., professor in the Department of Leukemia. Epigenetics involves the biochemical regulation of genes rather than actual damage to or mutation of DNA. Issa and colleagues were instrumental in the development of decitabine, one of the first epigenetic drugs, which turns on genes that have been chemically shut down.

"Our plans are to find markers that can guide individualized epigenetic therapy by identifying patients most likely to respond," says Issa. "We'll start in leukemia, primarily at M. D. Anderson."

Through a third Dream Team grant, Roy S. Herbst, M.D., Ph.D., professor in the Department of Thoracic/Head and Neck Medical Oncology, leads research through the department's innovative BATTLE clinical trial (related story on page 6). The research focuses on circulating tumor cells in the bloodstream to detect specific mutations in a variety of cancers and predict patients' responses to treatment.

The BATTLE program relies on tumor biopsies to detect relevant mutations.

"We hope circulating tumor cells will allow us to do the same thing without having to do a biopsy," Herbst says. "We would be able to conduct continuous sampling with this technology."

The charitable initiative Stand Up To Cancer raised most of its funds during a telecast in September 2008 on ABC, NBC and CBS. Stand Up To Cancer received 237 Dream Team applications and awarded \$73.6 million to five teams in May.

See related videos at www.mdanderson.org/cancernewsline.



Gordon Mills, M.D., Ph.D.

Study Reports Major Advance in Lung Cancer Treatment

An international Phase III trial has shown that the oral targeted therapy vandetanib, when combined with standard chemotherapy, improves progression-free survival for patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer. The findings mark the first clinical benefit of combining a small molecule targeted agent and standard chemotherapy for lung cancer. What's more, researchers report that vandetanib is a dual inhibitor and is the first single agent in lung cancer to target both the epidermal growth factor receptor and the vascular endothelial growth factor receptor.

Roy S. Herbst, M.D., Ph.D., professor in the Department of Thoracic/Head and Neck Medical Oncology at M. D. Anderson and the study's international principal investigator, presented the findings at the American Society of Clinical Oncology's annual meeting in May.

"This study shows that an oral tyrosine kinase inhibitor can be combined with chemotherapy safely and effectively to provide systematic benefit to patients with this life-threatening disease," says Herbst. "The study will have immediate clinical implications. Still, we need to build on this research and turn our focus toward better identifying molecular markers involved, with the ultimate goal of personalizing our patients' care."

Hear a related podcast at www.mdanderson.org/cancernewsline.



Roy S. Herbst, M.D., Ph.D.

Vaccine Helps Body Fight Advanced Melanoma

Researchers attribute improved response rates and progression-free survival among patients with advanced melanoma to a first-of-its-kind vaccine used in combination with the immunotherapy drug interleukin-2.

Patrick Hwu, M.D., professor and chair of M. D. Anderson's Department of Melanoma Medical Oncology and a co-investigator on the study, presented the findings of a large, multi-institutional



Patrick Hwu, M.D.

Phase III clinical trial at the American Society of Clinical Oncology's annual meeting in May.

During a previous tenure at the National Cancer Institute, Hwu helped develop the peptide vaccine, which activates the body's cytotoxic T cells to recognize antigens on the surface of the tumor. The T cells then secrete enzymes that poke holes in the tumor cell's membrane and cause it to disintegrate.

The Phase III randomized trial of the vaccine with interleukin-2 opened more than 10 years ago.

"While more follow-up is needed, this study serves as a proof-of-principle for vaccines' role in melanoma and in cancer therapy overall," says Hwu. "If we can use the body's own defense system to attack tumor cells, we can provide a mechanism for ridding the body of cancer without destroying healthy tissue."

Hear a related podcast at www.mdanderson.org/cancernewsline.

Metastatic Colorectal Cancer Survival Improves

There's been a dramatic increase in survival for patients with metastatic colorectal cancer, say researchers at M. D. Anderson. They credit new chemotherapy and biological agents, combined with surgical advances in liver resection, with increasing the five-year survival rate from 8 percent to 30 percent.

Scott Kopetz, M.D., assistant professor in the Department of Gastrointestinal Medical Oncology, was the corresponding author on the first study in the past 20 years to look at survival rates for metastatic colorectal cancer. Published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, the retrospective, population-based study of 2,470 newly diagnosed patients at M. D. Anderson and Mayo Clinic not only found a significant improvement in overall survival, but also demonstrated a degree and rapidity of improvement rarely seen in metastatic cancers, says Kopetz.

"Many of these patients are not necessarily disease-free but are living with their cancer with a high quality of life," he says. "For some patients, our goal of making metastatic colorectal cancer a chronic condition is closer to becoming a reality."

Hear a related podcast at www.mdanderson.org/cancernewsline.

'FOREVER IRENE' SYMBOLIZES SURVIVOR'S RESILIENCE

A recent spring morning found cancer survivor Irene Hunsicker on familiar territory, at M. D. Anderson, where she's been a patient for 10 years. But on this day there were no doctor's appointments, no treatments, no tests to endure.

She came to dig in the dirt.

With garden shovels at the ready, Hunsicker and her oncologist, Barbara Pro, M.D., associate professor and T cell lymphoma team leader at M. D. Anderson, greeted a gathering of well-wishers and prepared to plant a rose bush in the institution's garden near the entrance to Clark Clinic. Not just any garden-variety rose, the latest addition is 'Forever Irene', whose name was the winning entry in a contest sponsored by the Houston Chronicle.

The fragrant, deep-pink rose is a hardy repeat-bloomer that symbolizes the resilience of its namesake. Hunsicker has been diagnosed with three cancers over the past decade, most recently angioimmunoblastic T cell lymphoma, a rare, aggressive disease.

On hand for the planting were Jean and Mike Shoup, owners of the Antique Rose Emporium in Independence, Texas. Shoup bred 'Forever Irene' by crossing the disease-resistant 'Carefree Beauty' with 'Granny Grimmets', an old garden rose known for its color and fragrance.

The Antique Rose Emporium is contributing a portion of 'Forever Irene' sales to a fund in honor of Hunsicker supporting Pro's research in T cell lymphoma.

A book signing and rose sale immediately following the rose planting enabled passersby to purchase 'Forever Irene' for their own gardens as well as Houston Chronicle lifestyle editor Molly Glentzer's "Pink Ladies and Crimson Gents: Portraits and Legends of 50 Roses," with a portion of book sales going to the research fund.

Hunsicker's friends and family launched a letter-writing campaign to name the rose after her. They suggested several names until husband Jerry, senior vice president of the Tampa Bay Rays and former Houston Astros general manager, came up with the winner.



Hunsicker, an avid gardener, says the naming of 'Forever Irene' has been "truly humbling."

"It's amazing. Famous people have roses named after them, and this touched my heart," says Hunsicker, whose disease is in remission. "After three cancers, one metastasis and being in and out of remission over the course of 10 years, you have to have amazing support. My family and friends are my circle of life."

On the cover: Cancer survivor Irene Hunsicker, right, and her oncologist, Barbara Pro, M.D., take advantage of a sunny day to plant a 'Forever Irene' rose, named in honor of Hunsicker in a Houston Chronicle contest. Photo by Barry Smith

Above: The 'Forever Irene' rose is available at www.antiqueroseemporium.com. Photo courtesy of Antique Rose Emporium

PLANNED GIFT DEMONSTRATES NURSE'S WILL TO DO THE RIGHT THING

Spend five minutes with Melissa Gilhart, and you feel you're with a friend. Maybe it's the twinkle in her eyes. Or her contagious smile as she speaks passionately about what's important to her. Perhaps it's the impression that she's far wiser than her 46 years after more than a decade of traveling the world.

Gilhart has been to all seven continents since 1995, but not, she admits, to "all the countries." She's working on that by

immersing herself in the communities she visits: biking to rural areas and small towns, spending time with villagers and absorbing their languages bit by bit. Whether hanging out on a beach in Croatia or spending time with schoolchildren in Vietnam, Gilhart travels to learn more about people and their cultures.

Gilhart came to work as a clinical nurse at M. D. Anderson for a similar reason.

"The people who come here from all over the world for cancer care are inspirational," she says. "Many travel thousands of miles from home, and they say that they're lucky they have such a great place to come for treatment."

She works with some of the youngest of these inspirations, spending most of her nursing hours at the Children's Cancer Hospital at M. D. Anderson.

There it became clear to Gilhart that she wanted to give more than just time. She's taken her commitment to cancer patient care a major step further by including the institution in her estate plan. Gilhart has tailored her will to include a fund created to help cancer patients who travel from other countries to M. D. Anderson.

"M. D. Anderson's values match mine," she

Inveterate traveler Melissa Gilhart says it's important that her will reflects her personal values. Through a planned gift to M. D. Anderson, she's got the wheels in motion. Photo courtesy of Melissa Gilhart

says. "I'm a 'third-world country' traveler. The people in those countries are survivors. Our patients are survivors, too."

Cancer has had a significant impact on Gilhart's life, extending beyond her occupation to her own diagnosis of breast cancer. She lost her mother to brain cancer in 1981.

"My cancer experience has made me realize what people go through," she says.

Convinced that "too few people have wills," Gilhart is determined to educate others on the importance of estate planning.

"It's a way to make sure that the things that are important to you now remain significant after you're gone," she says. "People need to sit down and have a talk with their loved ones, and then they need to act on it."

She stresses the value of thinking about planned giving while young.

"My aunt has been gone for four years, and we're still in probate because she didn't have a will," she says. "You're never too young or too busy to have a will."

While Gilhart's excursions have her flying around the world, her resolve to ensure her legacy remains grounded.

"Having a will is so easy," she says. "It's just the right thing to do."

Learn more about planned giving at www.mdanderson.planyourlegacy.org.



GOLFERS GET IN THE SWING FOR S.C.O.P.E.

The American Cancer Society ranks colorectal cancer as the third most common cancer in men and women and the second leading cause of cancer death. The David C. Winter Charitable Foundation is dedicated to changing those statistics by helping educate the public about the importance of regular colonoscopies.

Representatives of the foundation presented a \$25,000 check at the March 28 Sprint for Colorectal Oncology Prevention and Education (S.C.O.P.E.) fun run/walk. The foundation, 2009 underwriter for S.C.O.P.E. awareness and community education initiatives, raises funds through an annual golf tournament at Tour 18 Houston.

This year's David C. Winter Memorial Golf Tournament, held April 16, attracted 126 players — friends, family and colleagues of the Colt International executive who died at 53 of colorectal cancer in 2006.

"If we could get every person in this room to realize that a simple procedure can save lives, what a significant accomplishment in David's honor that would be," said Malcolm Hawkins, president of Colt International.

Candy Winter, David's wife of 25 years,

and daughter Ashley, 23, were on hand to reinforce the importance of education and early detection. A colonoscopy might have detected David's cancer sooner, they both agreed. Instead, he was diagnosed at Stage IV. His widow and daughter now include regular screenings as part of their health plans.

"We were overwhelmed by the donations this year," said Candy of the third annual event, as players from Canada, Florida, Iowa, Arizona, Colorado and across Texas browsed silent auction items such as a UT Longhorns 2005 National Championship helmet signed by Vince Young and an NFL football autographed by Hall of Fame coach Don Shula. "David would be blown away at this show of love and support. We'll continue this forever."

Participants enjoyed a mild spring afternoon playing a course designed after some of the most well-known holes in golf.

"We talked about what David would want," said Joel Purdom, Colt International CEO. "He was an avid golfer and such a people person. He'd smile and be very proud that we're doing this."

Sponsors included Colt International, Cyberlink ASP, Pegasus Flight Support, Events

& More, Piatto Ristorante, FBO Logistics, Frank Crystal & Company, Shell Aviation, Carrabba's and Global Ground Transport. Sports broadcaster John Granato of 1560 AM KGOW's "The Game" served as honorary chair.

Tournament organizers anticipate a full field of 144 players for next year's event, April 15, 2010, at Tour 18.



Candy Winter celebrates her husband's memory with, from left, Eldon Rude, Peter Baer and Tim Miller at the recent David C. Winter Memorial Golf Tournament at Tour 18 Houston. Photo by Richard Hudgens

PET BURRO GOES TO THE TOP OF THE CLASS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The "Kiss the Burro" challenge at Buist Academy in Charleston, S.C., deserves an A-plus for originality.

Teacher Robin Polasek and her husband, Daniel, raised \$3,000 for the Children's Cancer Hospital at M. D. Anderson, with help from a miniature donkey, several classes of hard-working elementary school students and a company with a matching donations policy.

Daniel was diagnosed with melanoma in August 2007. Doctors at home told him he had months to live, but the couple refused to

believe they would have such a short time left together. That's why they came to M. D. Anderson.

While Daniel received treatment, says Robin, the courage of other patients, especially children, gave her a new outlook.

She started making plans for a fundraiser. A woman who owns miniature donkeys offered to give Robin a burro for free. The Polaseks named the burro Wen-Jen after Daniel's oncologist, Wen-Jen Hwu, M.D., Ph.D., professor of melanoma medical oncology.

Robin challenged the classes at Buist Academy to raise \$50 each. In return, the teacher for that class would have to kiss the burro. The idea was a big hit, and students eagerly accepted the challenge.

One parent saw firsthand the impact on her son, a student in Robin's Spanish class. Marie Barber says she was amazed by his desire to do chores in exchange for money to contribute to the cause.

When the big day came, the school had raised \$1,500. A special assembly gave students the opportunity to watch 25 teachers and the school principal make good on their promise and,

one by one, kiss the burro.

Barber, who works for Bristol-Myers Squibb, checked her company's matching donations policy and filled out the necessary paperwork, bringing the total to \$3,000.

HALLIBURTON HELPING FIGHT CANCER

Halliburton has long been known as a leader in the energy industry, but now its employees are taking the initiative to tackle cancer as well.

Through an annual giving campaign, Halliburton employees have chosen M. D. Anderson as their No. 1 charity of choice — out of 930 possible charities.

Each year, Halliburton employees participate in the company's "Giving Choices" program, and Halliburton matches their contributions by 10 percent. This year, the corporation plans to give more than \$155,000 to the institution.

"Halliburton has a commitment and core value of being a good corporate citizen and neighbor in the communities where our employees live and work," says Mabel Menefee, manager of community relations at Halliburton. "We're pleased to be able to partner with employees to support M. D. Anderson."



Robin Polasek, a Spanish teacher at Buist Academy in Charleston, S.C., enlisted the help of her pet burro to follow through on a unique fundraiser inspired by husband Daniel's care at M. D. Anderson. Photo by Marie Barber

Read more donor stories at www.mdanderson.org/gifts.

A Banner Year as M. D. Anderson Extends Services to Arizona



M. D. Anderson has joined with Arizona's leading health care provider to create the M. D. Anderson Banner Cancer Center. The agreement with Banner Health marks the broadest extension of the institution's clinical services outside of Houston.

Located on the campus of Banner Gateway Medical Center in the eastern Arizona city of Gilbert, the center is scheduled to open in late 2011. The 120,000 square-foot cancer outpatient center will provide 76 patient beds on two

floors and will offer medical oncology, radiation oncology, surgical oncology, pathology, laboratory, diagnostic imaging and other supportive clinical services. M. D. Anderson will have clinical oversight for all aspects of care delivery.

"This is a great day for all people in Arizona who are touched by cancer," says Peter S. Fine, Banner Health president and CEO. "We're bringing patients and their families the latest in knowledge-based cancer care, guided by the top

Employees of Arizona's leading health care provider gather to mark the announcement of the M. D. Anderson Banner Cancer Center, to open in 2011.

Photo by Gracie Chavez

cancer center in the country."

Thomas W. Burke, M.D., executive vice president and physician-in-chief at M. D. Anderson, describes the collaboration as an opportunity in a fast-growing area "where we can truly make a difference with leading-edge therapies and prevention."

AACR Exec Receives First Margaret Kripke Legend Award



From left: Margaret Kripke, Ph.D., special adviser to the provost at M. D. Anderson; Margaret Foti, M.D., Ph.D., CEO of AACR; and Elizabeth Travis, Ph.D., associate vice president for Women Faculty Programs at M. D. Anderson, commemorate the inaugural Margaret Kripke Legend Award. *Photo by Barry Smith*

From editorial assistant to chief executive officer, Margaret Foti, M.D., Ph.D., has achieved much during her career at the American Association for Cancer Research. Along the way, she's made a difference in the fight against cancer, helping other women do the same and making sure they receive the credit they deserve.

Recently Foti was in the spotlight as the recipient of the institution's inaugural

achieved many firsts for women at M. D. Anderson, including her promotion to executive vice president and chief academic officer.

Foti delivered the Kripke Lecture, titled "Exceptional Women Leaders: Indispensable to Progress in Cancer Science and Medicine," in March at M. D. Anderson.

The Kripke Legend Award is administered by M. D. Anderson's Women Faculty Programs Office, which Kripke established before her retirement in 2007 to improve recruitment, retention and development of women faculty. Kripke is now special adviser to the provost at M. D. Anderson.

Foti co-founded Women in Cancer Research, an AACR group that supports the professional advancement and scientific achievements of women. WICR is open to men and women.

Foti started at AACR as editorial assistant for the journal *Cancer Research*. She was promoted four years later, becoming the youngest managing editor of a major scientific journal in the United States. After progressing through several management roles, Foti was named AACR's first CEO in 1982.

Foti describes Kripke as "one of the true pioneers" in the advancement of women in science and says receiving the Kripke Legend Award is "a tremendous honor."

"This award is special to me because I believe so strongly that we need to recognize the achievements women have made to science and encourage the next generation interested in careers in cancer research," says Foti.

Margaret Kripke Legend Award. Established in 2008, the Kripke Legend Award recognizes scientific and medical leaders who have made extraordinary efforts to hire a diverse workforce, promote women to leadership roles, nominate women for awards and otherwise advance their careers. The award was established in honor of Margaret Kripke, Ph.D., a distinguished scientist who

Arceneaux Award Honors Dynamic Nurse in Neurosurgery

Gisela Sanchez-Williams, RN, MSN, ANP-BC, rushed to a mid-May meeting with Raymond Sawaya, M.D., chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at M. D. Anderson, to discuss a support group she created two years ago that addresses the special needs of spine tumor patients. But a knock at the conference room door indicated a change in the agenda. Amid a bevy of smiling colleagues bearing roses and balloons, Sanchez-Williams absorbed the news: She's the 2009 recipient of the Ethel Fleming Arceneaux Outstanding Nurse-Oncologist Award, the institution's most prestigious honor in nursing.

Nominated by her peers, supervisors and patients in recognition of exemplary clinical and research skills, Sanchez-Williams is an advanced practice nurse in the Department of Neurosurgery's spine program.

Sanchez-Williams formally received the \$15,000 award, established in 1982 by the Brown Foundation Inc., at a June 18 ceremony attended by numerous family members, friends, colleagues and patients.

Walter Negley presented the check on behalf of the Brown Foundation Inc.



Gisela Sanchez-Williams

"I'm one of the luckiest surgeons at M. D. Anderson because I get to work with Gisela," says Laurence D. Rhines, M.D., spine program director. "She's able to focus on patients' neurosurgical issues and at the same time recognize all of their medical, psychosocial and personal issues."

Sanchez-Williams studied liberal arts at Keuka College in Keuka Park, N.Y., and received a bachelor's degree in nursing from the Colegio Universitario Metropolitano in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico. She also received a master's degree and advance nurse practitioner certification from the University of Texas School of Nursing at Houston. Sanchez-Williams worked at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center for seven years before joining M. D. Anderson in 1991 as a senior research nurse in the Department of Leukemia. She worked in the Department of Thoracic/Head and Neck Medical Oncology from 2000 to 2004.

"I'm beyond honored," says Sanchez-Williams. "I feel privileged to work with this group. Dr. Rhines and I have the same vision. This award speaks also to the nurse practitioners with whom I work. We're a cohesive, supportive and mentoring group."

M. D. Anderson has provided "priceless lessons that no book can offer," she says.



Raymond Sawaya, M.D., chair of the Department of Neurosurgery, congratulates a surprised and speechless Gisela Sanchez-Williams who reacts after learning she was named recipient of M. D. Anderson's most prestigious nursing award. Photo by Eli Gukich

"Patients have taught me to relish the simple moments, to remain humble, to become aware of the power of touch and prayer and to listen and never stop learning," says Sanchez-Williams. "For this I am truly grateful."

Business and Professional Women's Club Lauds Pathology Chair

Each year the Texas Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs honors one woman who exemplifies a spirit of discovery, caring and dedication in advancing cancer research and treatment. For her leadership in the laboratory and her role in helping speed the development of new cancer therapies, Janet M. Bruner, M.D., is the recipient of the 2009 BPW/Texas Award.

Bruner, professor and chair of the Department of Pathology and deputy head of the Division of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at M. D. Anderson, accepted the \$1,000 cash award at a ceremony in March.

An accomplished clinician, Bruner is internationally recognized for her expertise in diagnostic neuropathology. In the 1980s, she was instrumental in establishing M. D. Anderson's Brain Tumor Program.

In 1998, Bruner became the institution's first female chair of a clinical department, and in that capacity she has recruited more than 40 diagnostic pathologists. In 1999, she led the Department of Pathology to become the first at a cancer center to subspecialize its diagnostic pathology services.

Bruner is the initial recipient of the Ferenc and Phyllis Gyorkey Endowed Chair in

Pathology and is a past president of the Houston Society of Clinical Pathologists.

BPW/Texas is a longtime supporter of M. D. Anderson. In 1941, its members encouraged the state's lawmakers to appropriate funds to establish the institution and in 1949, to fund atomic energy-radiological facilities. BPW/Texas awarded its first gift to M. D. Anderson in 1974 and has since contributed more than \$1.2 million to an array of research projects, educational programs and patient services.

Pivotal T cell Research Lands AAI Award

Exploring the intricacies of T cells, Chen Dong, Ph.D., a professor in M. D. Anderson's Department of Immunology, uncovered a new molecular route in the adaptive immune system. Blocking the path might prevent autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis. Following the path could direct a powerful immune response against cancer.

The American Association of Immunologists honored Dong at its annual meeting in May with the AAI-BD Biosciences Investigator Award.

Dong and colleagues reported their findings in a Nature Immunology paper that has been cited more than 540 times in the works of other scientists. Clinical trials for rheumatoid arthritis and psoriasis are under way based on Dong's work.

Dong, whose research has benefited from the George and Barbara Bush Endowment for Innovative Cancer Research (related story on page 2), also directs his department's new Center for Inflammation and Cancer.

Perspectives

Comments? Suggestions?

We welcome your perspective.

E-mail Promise@mdanderson.org.

Promise

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UPCOMINGEVENTS

September

9

San Antonio —
Teal Lunch
for Life

September

10-12

Houston —
Anderson Network
Conference

September

12

Clear Lake —
Jori Zemel
Foundation Gala

September

18

Dallas —
A Conversation
With a Living
Legend

October

3

Houston —
Komen Race
for the Cure®

October

7

Houston —
Zeta Tau Alpha
Foundation Think
Pink Luncheon

October

12-18

The Woodlands —
Administaff Small
Business Classic

October

17

Bastrop —
Cattlemen for
Cancer Research
Cattle Auction

October

26

Cypress —
Bob Tallman's
Pasture Pool Golf
Classic

October

27

Houston —
Julie and Ben
Rogers Award for
Excellence

October

28-29

Houston —
Board of Visitors
Annual Meeting

November

14

Austin —
Rexanna's
Foundation Gala

November

21-23

Houston —
Golfers Against
Cancer Tournament
and Dinner

December

3

Beaumont —
Santa's Elves

December

3

Houston —
A Conversation
With a Living
Legend

December

10

Houston —
Santa's Elves