DRAW THE LINE TO END CANCER
The “Stripes Celebrates Tomorrow” campaign surpasses goals, raising almost $3 million for Vice President for Development

www.bakerinstitute.org/events/1669 to view the entire proceedings.

An enormous opportunity to ensure our educators and policy makers. We have conducted clinical and translational studies with colleagues at MD Anderson and beyond. “Our understanding of the disease’s molecular biology and genetics has transformed the field and led to dramatic opportunities in personalized medicine,” says Gershenson.

“Our patients teach us humility, priorities and the importance of living life to the fullest.” —David Gershenson, M.D.

“The International Gynecology Cancer Society (IGCS) presented David Gershenson, M.D., professor and past chair of Gynecologic Oncology and Reproductive Medicine, its Award for Excellence at its November meeting in Melbourne, Australia. The honor recognizes Gershenson’s advancement of scientific knowledge, specifically of rare non-epithelial ovarian cancers, his breadth of experience and his collaborative efforts with experts around the world. Gershenson, who joined MD Anderson in 1979, has held leadership roles in numerous national and international organizations. He conducts clinical and translational studies with colleagues at MD Anderson and beyond. “Our understanding of the disease’s molecular biology and genetics has transformed the field and led to dramatic opportunities in personalized medicine,” says Gershenson. “Our patients teach us humility, priorities and the importance of living life to the fullest. In return, it’s vital that we offer them the very best possible care,” he says.

Gardasil 9:
New ammo against HPV-related cancers

By Ron Gilmore

The Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) approval of a new vaccine that targets five additional strains of human papillomavirus (HPV) fortifies a proven cancer prevention weapon, says MD Anderson President Ron DePinho, M.D. DePinho, the father of three, considers HPV vaccination a “national child welfare priority and major parental responsibility.”

In December, the FDA greenlighted the use of Gardasil 9 to prevent cancers caused by nine HPV strains — five more than its predecessor, Gardasil. The FDA says Gardasil 9 has the potential to prevent most cervical, vulvar, vaginal and anal cancers.

“This is an incredible step forward in our fight to end cancer,” says DePinho. “MD Anderson hopes the vaccine approval will change the conversation about HPV vaccination from set to saving lives.”

MD Anderson clinicians, researchers and educators are spearheading an institutionwide approach to HPV-related cancers.

Programs are underway for parents, teachers, clergy, policy makers, pediatricians and the general public to increase HPV vaccination rates in Texas and across the nation, improve early screening and detection and develop novel therapies.

“If we can increase vaccination rates in this country, this vaccine approval has the power to save thousands of lives,” says Lois Ramondetta, M.D., associate professor in Gynecologic Oncology. In fact, she estimates that the new vaccine will cover about 90% of cervical cancers, one of the most common forms of HPV-caused cancer.
“MD Anderson has been and continues to be a BEACON OF HOPE for those who’ve been stricken with that six-letter word that no one ever wants to hear. Hundreds of thousands of us are still alive, leading HOPEFUL LIVES because of this wonderful institution and its doctors, nurses and researchers.”

—Ted Nelson

“Thought I knew about MD Anderson and its mission to end cancer. But until I became one of the treated, I realized I knew people who were patients there, but I didn’t really know much about the institution and the qualities that set it apart.

In late September 2009, I was diagnosed with a large tumor on my left kidney. In my urologist’s words, these tumors are “almost always malignant” and no matter what, it had to come out. My wife, Kathryn, at the urging of a dear friend, insisted that we see if “they” would look at my case at MD Anderson. “They” did accept me as a patient. That was more than five years ago, and I remain a renal cell carcinoma survivor. I’m not cured, but my prognosis remains excellent due to the exceptional care I have received and continue to receive at MD Anderson. I can’t say enough wonderful things about Dr. Chris Wood and his talented team of surgeons, who excised my volleyball-sized tumor. Dr. Ala Yavuzcu, who removed some of the renal cell lesions from my left lung, Dr. Patrick Hwu and his IL-2 team; and now, my wonderful oncologist and friend, Dr. Nizar Tannir and the entire team of genitourinary oncologists, who lead the way in renal cell and other genitourinary cancer research.

Getting to know you

For me, however, the most amazing part of my story hasn’t been the exceptional treatment, but rather the unique opportunity to get to know this huge, living, breathing institution known as MD Anderson. It’s become the most meaningful and unbelievable experience in my life. Having the privilege to understand more about MD Anderson’s mission and to interact with this huge family of caring employees, almost 20,000 team members who share the common goal of lifting the lives and spirits of its thousands of patients and their families. I’ve been amased at the heartfelt care and compassion put forth by each one of these professionals. I sincerely mean that. Every team member is a professional, no matter his or her role. The very core of their mission is to be professional and caring in every sense of the words and to make our visits and treatment the best that they can be.

My Moon Shot

Six years ago I was at a friend’s lake house. His mom saw a mole, and she said I needed to get in to see a dermatologist ASAP. They took the mole off and diagnosed it as melanoma. At that point, they referred me to MD Anderson. Everyone has been pleasant, helpful, trying to do whatever they can to make your stay easier. It’s really hard to put a value on that.

I started the Oilfield Melanoma Moon Shot Fund to see if I could

involve my company, my friends, organizations that I belong to. I hope that because of this fund and other donations, we’ll have a cure and a preventive for melanoma soon.

In addition to the gifts listed above, the program benefits from the generous support of Atwood Oceanics, Diamond Offshore, Energy Quest LLC, Linn Energy, Nabors, Phillips 66, Parker Drilling, Simmons and Company International, Spectra Energy and Valero. “MD Anderson is grateful for the generosity of our energy industry partners. Their commitment will make a difference in the lives of cancer patients everywhere,” says Ron DePinto, M.D., president of MD Anderson. “Together, we’re pushing the boundaries, with the energy we need to fuel the fight.”

LEARN MORE AT www.mdanderson.org/gifts

PHOTO BY ADOLFO CHAVEZ III

PHOTO BY F. CARTER SMITH

PHOTO BY DAVID EKAS

PHOTO BY SARAH WATSON
STRIPES® CONVENIENCE STORES celebrated Pediatric Cancer Awareness Month through the “Stripes Celebrates Tomorrows” campaign. One dollar at a time, customers and employees at more than 645 locations across Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma raised more than $1.4 million for MD Anderson Children’s Cancer Hospital through purchases of paper pin-ups for display in the stores throughout September 2014. The total contribution doubled to more than $2.8 million, thanks to the James B. and Lois R. Archer Charitable Foundation and the Triumph Over Kid Cancer Foundation, which matched all donations. Proceeds will support pediatric cancer research as well as MD Anderson Children’s Cancer Hospital’s Pediatric Education and Creative Arts Program, one of only two privately accredited K-12 hospital schools in the nation.

“With the support of our generous customers and our passionate Stripes team members, we surpassed our highest expectations,” says Eduardo Pereda, Stripes vice president of marketing. “The grand total of this campaign, along with the matching funds from our partnering foundations, will offer more hope and healing for many children.”

Sam Susser, chairman of the board of Susser Holdings Corp. and a member of the MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors, was instrumental in developing the successful campaign.

“Rarity Herrera, the face of Stripes Celebrates Tomorrows (also pictured above with her mother, Evelyn Pardini)
THE JOKE’S ON BRAIN CANCER

BY SARAH WATSON

When the late James Brough and his wife, Jamie, established the Houston-based Brough Foundation for Brain Cancer Research in 2011, they used humor to pack a powerful punch in their fight against glialblastoma multiforme, the most aggressive form of brain cancer. The foundation raises awareness and funds through a comedy-themed gala, Stand Up For Brain Cancer, and recently made a $5 million commitment to MD Anderson.

“Phantastrophy drives innovative research, which drives the process of discovering new treatments and delivering them to the patient,” says Jamie’s neurosurgeon, Frederick Lang, M.D., professor and director of clinical research in Neurosurgery. “Thanks to the Brough Foundation’s generous support, we have the trials underway.”

The Brough Foundation directed its first grant in 2012 toward research led by Lang, whose clinical trials focus on a viral smart bomb developed at MD Anderson by Juan Paez, M.D., professor in Neuro-Oncology – Research. Delta-24-RGD, a type of cold virus, is engineered to infect and kill tumor cells. Lang’s lab has pioneered the use of mesenchymal stem cells to deliver Delta-24 RGD and other biological therapies to brain tumors. This year’s Stand Up For Brain Cancer, May 7 at the River Oaks Country Club, will feature Jim Belushi and his comedy troupe, the Board of Comedy.

“We’re grateful to everyone who’s contributed so generously to our foundation,” says Jamie. “The more we spread the word about Dr. Lang’s research and how underfunded brain cancer is, the more excited people become about wanting to join the cause.”

James Brough, with wife Jamie and son Parker, contributed to glialblastoma multiforme in 2012 or age 21.

COMPASSION INSPIRES CHOLANGIOCARCINOMA SUPPORT

Foundation supports collaborative basic research targeting new treatments

BY WENDY MOHON

While the Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation recently awarded $50,000 to support the basic research of Milind Javle, M.D., associate professor in Gastrointestinal Medical Oncology, it’s his compassion as a physician that impresses the nonprofit’s supporters.

“We have confidence in Dr. Javle, but first and foremost, in his character as a clinician,” says Stacie Lindsey, the foundation’s president and founder. Thousands of patients across the globe “who respect and love Dr. Javle,” visit the foundation’s discussion board. “It’s available to them and their families, and they feel that truly cares about them and their situations,” says Lindsey.

The foundation’s gift will help advance Javle’s genetic research by developing a mouse model of cholangiocarcinoma, a bile duct cancer, with the BAP1 gene mutation.

“This will allow us to test new targeted agents that hold promise against this mutation and will ultimately have an impact on patient outcomes,” Javle says. “We’re grateful to the foundation for its support.”

Javle will coordinate the research with Anirban Maitra, M.B.B.S., professor in Pathology Administration. “We appreciate Dr. Javle’s willingness to collaborate with other professionals,” says Lindsey. “He’s respectful of others’ skills and well respected himself. He has relationships throughout the world that he’s called on to assist us at the foundation. Institutions must work together for these smaller patient groups if we want to make an impact on their care now and in the future.”

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WHY NOT SHOOT FOR THE MOON? 

Couple gives $500,000 to Breast and Ovarian Cancers Moon Shot

BY WENDY MOHON

FOR SHEILA AND JORDAN “JERRY” REESE of Houston, the connection to Making Cancer History® goes far deeper than her membership on the MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors. Inspired in part by the care Jerry’s mother received at the institution, the couple recently donated $500,000 to support the Breast and Ovarian Cancers Moon Shot.

A plaque at MD Anderson in the E.O. Wilson Family Waiting Area commemorates their donation to MD Anderson. It reads: “Sheila and Jordan Reese, III Waiting Area is dedicated to the memory of Edith Hughes Reese, with appreciation for the research in triple-negative breast cancer, high-grade serous ovarian cancer.”

“Because Jerry’s mother died from triple-negative breast cancer, we wanted to support research in an area of cancer research,” says Jordan. “Even though there’s been amazing progress in treatment, there’s so much more to do, so why not shoot for the moon?”

Anil Sood, M.D., professor, and vice chair for translational research in Gynecologic Oncology and Reproductive Medicine, is one of the leaders of the Breast and Ovarian Cancers Moon Shot.

"WHY NOT SHOOT FOR THE MOON?" Couple gives $500,000 to Breast and Ovarian Cancers Moon Shot

Breast and Ovarian Cancers Moon Shoot offers personalized genetic screening and counseling to triple-negative breast cancer and high-grade serous ovarian cancer patients. The goal is to determine if they or their family members have BRCA gene mutations that lead to these cancers, which share underlying molecular events and other similarities.

What motivates a new ovarian cancer foundation to bestow its inaugural grant to MD Anderson?

“We chose the Moon Shots Program because it gave us hope, and that can be truly challenging to find when you’re talking about extreme cancer,” says Buck Dodson, president and executive director of the Susan Poorman Blackie Ovarian Cancer Foundation, an organization founded by and named for his mother. “The fact that MD Anderson is a world-renowned cancer center in our hometown was the icing on the cake. It was an intuitive choice for our first investment.”

The foundation awarded $100,000 toward evaluating genetic markers to identify effective therapies for ovarian cancer, and another $35,000 for an ovarian cancer early detection breath analysis.

And Sood, M.D., professor and vice chair for translational research in Gynecologic Oncology and Reproductive Medicine, is a leader of the Breast and Ovarian Cancers Moon Shot. alma Nick, M.D., assistant professor, is developing an early detection breath analysis. They both agree that the foundation’s mission to empower women with knowledge and promote innovative, promising research.

“The money has enabled us to validate the promise of our breath analysis in a separate group of patients with confirmed ovarian cancer,” says Nick. The next step, she says, is evaluating the test on patients without a known ovarian cancer diagnosis.

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Painting out that philanthropic gifts are what make progressive research research such as the Moon Shots Program possible, Sood says this gift will “have a significant impact on research.”

“This isn’t something we can do by writing an NIH grant,” he says. “We really need private funding to make it happen.”

The Reesees are proud to be a part of what they believe is exciting and essential research. “The introduction of the Moon Shots Program is an important initiative to energize and further cancer research,” Sheila says. “We’re so fortunate to have MD Anderson in our community, and we felt it was our privilege to support this program.”

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DALLAS
A hole in one for cancer research
Luncheon honors golfing legend
A Conversation With a Living Legend® in Dallas celebrated its 25th anniversary Nov. 3, surpassing its $3 million fundraising goal for the second consecutive year.

BY MIRIAM SPRADLING

SAN ANTONIO
Coaching greats leave it all on the stage
Event raises record-breaking funds for the Moon Shots Program
The fifth A Conversation With a Living Legend® in San Antonio honored two storied football coaches, Mack Brown and R.C. Slocum. Tom Johnson, former CNN News Group president and a member of the MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors, interviewed them. Generous sponsors and 750 guests helped the Nov. 10 luncheon raise a record-breaking $430,000. Sonsy and Gene Williams served as first-time event chairs. Peggy and Lowry Mays and Sonya and Charles Red McCombs were honorary chairs.

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