Prom Party Palooza

Houston community rallies to create a night to remember for young cancer patients and their families
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UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

12: Houston Julie and Ben Rogers Award for Excellence

14: Dallas A Conversation With a Living Legend®: Santiago Calatrava, Ph.D.

20: Atlanta Making Cancer History® Seminar

OCTOBER

16: Houston Brown Foundation Award for Excellence in Oncology Nursing

29: Houston Little Galleria Halloween Spooktacular

NOVEMBER

7-8: Houston MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors Reception, Annual Meeting

11: Houston Boot Walk to End Cancer™

15: Houston A Conversation With a Living Legend®: Rich Kinder


ACCESS ANSWERS

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

For more information, please visit www.mdanderson.org/gifts or call 800-525-5841.

Download Promise at www.mdanderson.org/Promise.

If you do not want to receive certain fundraising communications from MD Anderson, please visit our website at www.mdanderson.org/FundraisingOptOut or contact us at 855-344-5272.
MD Anderson’s Moon Shots Program™ is a comprehensive, accelerated effort to significantly reduce cancer deaths and transform cancer care. Moon Shot™ teams pursue innovative projects prioritized for greatest patient impact, and specialized platforms serve as research engines to provide infrastructure, systems and strategy. These efforts will help support all other cancer research at MD Anderson. Funding for the initiative, launched in 2012, is from private philanthropy, institutional earnings, competitive research grants and commercialization of new discoveries.

Private philanthropic commitments to the Moon Shots Program™ total more than $449 million.

### MY MOON SHOT

DARON GRIBBLEDaron Gribble, originally from Aledo, Texas, now resides in Graford. He owns ANC Absolute Noise Control in Weatherford and also builds and remodels houses. He and his wife, Valerie, have three grown children. Gribble offered remarks on his cancer journey at this year’s Polo on the Prairie fundraiser in West Texas (page 7).

In 2015, I was diagnosed with melanoma. My dermatologist removed the affected area along my right cheek and jaw line but recommended I see an oncologist.

My sister, Michelle Wright, who had worked as a nurse in Houston for 40 years, suggested I see Dr. Randal Weber, chair of Head and Neck Surgery at MD Anderson.

Dr. Weber performed surgery and found the cancer indeed had been removed, but he detected one hot spot and removed it as well. Six months later after a routine CT scan, he called to tell me the results showed the tumor had spread to my lungs. Plus, three tumors had developed and were growing. I now had stage IV metastatic melanoma.

I can’t deny I was scared.

My choices were chemotherapy, surgery and radiation, and an immunotherapy clinical trial. I wanted the option that would allow me to continue to work and lead to the quickest recovery. Dr. Weber referred me to Dr. Hussein Tawbi, associate professor of Melanoma Medical Oncology, who discussed my options with my wife, Valerie, my sister and me.

Dr. Tawbi explained that immunotherapy targets the molecules on immune cells rather than the tumor cell itself, helping to eliminate the tumors and recurrence. Immunotherapy has become the standard care for metastatic melanoma.

I chose immunotherapy. Valerie drove me to Houston and back every other week. I was able to work during my treatment; while the days after treatment were tough, it was manageable.

After 24 treatments and with the guidance of Drs. Weber and Tawbi and Dr. Aung Naing, associate professor of Investigational Cancer Therapeutics, and the support of Valerie and Michelle, I am on the road to recovery.

The MD Anderson team is incredible. From the nurses drawing my blood to Dr. Naing’s targeted therapy group to the clinic staff who supported me through bi-weekly treatments, all were compassionate and dedicated to helping sustain me during this journey. They are my new extended family and the most incredible people to enter my life of 55 years.

### WHAT’S YOUR MOON SHOT?

Contact us at promise@mdanderson.org and tell us why MD Anderson’s Moon Shots Program is important to you.
GUILLERMINA LOZANO NAMED TO NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
Genetics expert pioneered p53 research

BY RON GILMORE

GUILLERMINA LOZANO, Ph.D., chair of Genetics, has been elected to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), a private, nonprofit society of distinguished scholars engaged in scientific and engineering research that was established in 1863 by President Abraham Lincoln.

Lozano is a pioneer in describing the p53 pathway, a recognized tumor suppressor gene associated with cancer. She is one of 84 new members and 21 foreign associates recognized for “distinguished and continuing achievements in original research.”

Lozano is the sixth MD Anderson scientist to be named to the NAS, joining Jim Allison, Ph.D., chair of Immunology; Craig Jordan, Ph.D., professor of Breast Medical Oncology; Ronald DePinho, M.D., professor of Cancer Biology; and Nancy Jenkins, Ph.D., and Neal Copeland, Ph.D., professors of Genetics.

“This is one of the highest honors that can be bestowed upon a scientist,” says Marshall E. Hicks, M.D., president ad interim. “Dr. Lozano’s well-deserved election speaks to her significant contributions to our understanding of p53 and her continued advances in cancer science.”

Lozano was the first to establish p53 as a transcriptional activator of other genes. Transcription is the first step in a gene’s expression of its protein. She also showed that common p53 mutants fail to launch transcription, and discovered other proteins, Mdm2 and Mdm4, that play critical roles in inhibiting p53 activity.

Lozano says she is proud that this honor recognizes “a group effort by my team and me, and my many collaborators at MD Anderson in our shared mission to end cancer. We are grateful, honored and proud to be the top-ranked cancer center in this national survey.”

Two MD Anderson subspecialties also were ranked high in the survey. In the Ear, Nose and Throat specialty, the Head and Neck Surgery service was ranked No. 15, and in Gynecology, Gynecologic Oncology and Reproductive Medicine ranked No. 17. The survey also ranked MD Anderson as “High Performing” in Diabetes & Endocrinology, Orthopedics and Urology.

“This recognition is a reminder that patients are at the center of all we do now and all we envision for the future,” says Stephen Hahn, M.D., deputy president and chief operating officer. “Our mission is bold, but it’s through innovative care, research, education and prevention that we will fulfill our promise to end cancer. It’s what we strive for every day.”
Ohio couple gives $10.5 million to MD Anderson UTHealth Graduate School

Grant establishes fellowships, research symposium, competitive awards

By Sarah Watson

Pioneering molecular endocrinologist John Kopchick, Ph.D., and his wife, Charlene, of Athens, Ohio, aim to pave the way for future trailblazers through a $10.5 million gift to The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center UTHealth Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.

The gift will fund up to 15 student fellowships at the MD Anderson UTHealth Graduate School, where John Kopchick received his Ph.D. in 1980. It also will fund the Dr. John J. Kopchick Research Symposium as well as competitive research awards for students and their faculty mentors.

John Kopchick is a distinguished professor and The Goll-Ohio Professor of Molecular and Cellular Biology at Ohio University, where he directs the Growth, Diabetes and Obesity Section of the Edison Biotechnology Institute in the Konneker Research Laboratories.

“It’s nice to give something back,” says Kopchick, who received the Rosalie B. Hite Fellowship during his time at the MD Anderson UTHealth Graduate School.

At a June ceremony at MD Anderson, Charlene Kopchick, Ohio University assistant dean of students for campus involvement, remarked that she and her husband are the first in their families to go to college and that “had John not received scholarships to come here, we wouldn’t be where we are. We hope that our gift will help other students in their graduate careers.”

The Kopchick fellowships and research symposium will nurture students and faculty “of the highest caliber,” says Ethan Dmitrovsky, M.D., professor, Thoracic/Head and Neck Medical Oncology.

“We’re grateful to Charlene and John Kopchick for their generosity, vision and support,” he says. “Their legacy gift advances our collective goal to help the next generation of biomedical scientists realize their potential in making a global impact on eradicating diseases around the world.”

GROWTH HORMONE RESEARCH CONTINUES

Kopchick was recruited to the MD Anderson UTHealth Graduate School by his mentor and academic adviser Ralph Arlinghaus, Ph.D., professor and Hubert L. Stringer Chair in Cancer Research, Translational Molecular Pathology at MD Anderson.

“Ralph and his research group were great,” says Kopchick. “I base my current research group on things I learned in Ralph’s laboratory — work hard and play hard.”

Kopchick’s research centers on the molecular structure of a growth hormone produced in the pituitary gland, where tumors and genetic mutations can alter production of this hormone and may lead to acromegaly (gigantism) or dwarfism.

Kopchick’s research led to the drug SOMAVERT® (pegvisomant), which the Food and Drug Administration approved in 2003 to treat acromegaly. Kopchick, who believes the drug may have other applications, including cancer treatment, has established a research project with MD Anderson’s Ahmed Kaseb, M.D., associate professor, Gastrointestinal Medical Oncology, and Hesham Amin, M.D., professor, Hematopathology, to determine if inhibiting growth hormone action will affect tumor growth.

TWO UT SYSTEM INSTITUTIONS WORKING TOGETHER

The MD Anderson UTHealth Graduate School is a partnership between MD Anderson and The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth). Established in 1963, the school has trained more than 2,600 biomedical scientists. Its more than 600 faculty members come from both MD Anderson and UTHealth.

The Kopchicks’ gift represents “the important role that collaborations between two UT institutions will play in advancing discoveries and cures,” says UT System Chancellor William H. McRaven.

“When you combine the expertise in the nation’s leading cancer center and the state’s most comprehensive academic health institution, graduate students in the biomedical sciences will have unprecedented opportunity for learning and discovery,” he says.

“We are profoundly grateful to the Kopchicks for generously supporting the power of collaborative science.”
ROGER KESSELER is a man of action. After graduating from Central Michigan University, he worked through the ranks to become the vice president and controller of Dow Chemical Company. Kesseler is happily retired and spends his time between Midland, Michigan, and Lake Jackson, Texas. In 2013, a cancer diagnosis forced him to take action once again.

In September 2013, something just didn’t feel right. I went to a family doctor and she said I had GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease). She gave me an antacid, but that didn’t solve it. I went back three more times and they did a CT scan, which showed nothing. I decided to go to the emergency room. The doctor told me there was nothing wrong. I said, ‘Doctor, there is something wrong with me. We’ve got to get to the bottom of this.’ A gastroenterologist took three biopsies and a week later called to tell me I had stage I B-cell lymphoma.

I knew I had to get to MD Anderson. Within a week, I was there meeting Dr. Larry Kwak, who ran tests. He told me that my cancer wasn’t stage I. It was stage IV.

By 11 p.m. that day I had chemotherapy pouring into me, the first of 360 hours of inpatient chemotherapy. Dr. Kwak was positive through the whole process. I never had a feeling that I wouldn’t make it. I was positive this was going to get solved.

By April 2014, my tumor was gone. A few weeks later, Dr. Kwak asked if I’d like to take part in a clinical trial with a radioactive drug called Zevalin. I jumped at the chance. Ever since, I’ve been cancer free.

I can’t say enough about how positive the treatment, the care and the level of concern is at MD Anderson. It’s a five-star facility. I’m an action-oriented person. From the beginning, I said, ‘Let’s go after it, let’s start the treatment,’ and we did. My advice for those going through this now? Follow your doctor’s orders. Follow their instructions and never lose hope.
Event co-sponsor Thomas Nguyen, in black T-shirt at left, a member of MD Anderson's Advance Team advisory board, huddles with fellow Pelil restaurant volunteers at the second annual Prom Party Palooza.

A Pageboy stylist gets patient Maggie Howard camera-ready. Before the big night, the National Association for Catering and Events and Al’s FormalWear provided a dress and suit shop, and Kendra Scott helped the teens accessorize with custom jewelry.

Brianna Terry, third from left, and her family are picture-perfect for an evening of glam and glitz.

MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital patient Giovanna Daza Di Francescantonio tests her luck at a casino party at The Park. Prom night options also included a dance for teens and a party hosted by Sunshine Kids for the 13-and-under set.

MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital patient Giovanna Daza Di Francescantonio tests her luck at a casino party at The Park. Prom night options also included a dance for teens and a party hosted by Sunshine Kids for the 13-and-under set.

COUNTRY MUSIC LEGEND RETURNS TO POLO ON THE PRAIRIE: Jerry Jeff Walker entertains two-steppers at Polo on the Prairie in April, 20 years after his first performance at the event in 1997. The annual fundraiser at the Musselman Brothers’ Lazy 3 Ranch in Albany, Texas, broke records this year, raising more than $436,000 for cancer research and patient programs at MD Anderson. Polo on the Prairie has raised more than $5.7 million over the past 31 years.
TOPGOLF TAKES A SWING AT ENDING CANCER
Alliance focuses on raising skin cancer awareness and supporting research and survivorship programs

BY LESLIE FRIEDMAN

Golf enthusiasts and amateurs alike attended a May 3 event at Topgolf Spring just north of Houston to meet World Golf Hall of Fame member and MD Anderson Ambassador Colin Montgomerie, show their support for cancer research and prevention programs at MD Anderson, and enjoy dinner, drinks and friendly competition. Montgomerie and Randy Jones, cancer survivor and Southern Texas PGA Professional of the Year, offered golf tips and instruction throughout the evening.

Topgolf recently joined forces with MD Anderson to support those touched by cancer, educate guests on sun-safety habits and raise funds for cancer research and programs that promote a healthy lifestyle.

Guests included Thierry de Cock Buning, originally from The Netherlands and now a Houston resident, who came to support MD Anderson and share photos he had taken with Montgomerie in 1998 and 2006. KPRC-TV’s Chip Brewster and Justin Stapleton also joined in the fun.

“I had an awesome time at the event and especially enjoyed talking weather with Colin Montgomerie,” says Stapleton.

TOPGOLF END CANCER CAMPAIGN
In July, Topgolf launched a nationwide fundraising campaign, offering guests a $10 play coupon for each $5 minimum donation to support MD Anderson programs including:

• Active Living After Cancer: improving the quality of life for sedentary cancer survivors, particularly those from medically underserved populations, by promoting physical activity and providing assistance on survivorship

• Steps2Health: a real-time intervention through a mobile application that provides personalized physical activity goals and uses gamification strategies to increase physical activity during and after cancer treatment

“Cancer touches nearly everyone, directly or indirectly, which is why Topgolf is proud to support MD Anderson’s mission to end cancer.”
— ERIK ANDERSON, Topgolf Entertainment Group co-chair and CEO

WEST COAST GATHERING: Erich Sturgis, M.D., from left, Susan and Chris Damico, Camille Grammer and Cassian Yee, M.D., pause for a quick photo at a reception in Los Angeles, California. The Damicos hosted nearly 70 guests at their Pacific Palisades home in May to raise awareness of MD Anderson’s world-class cancer research and patient care programs. Chris Damico, a head and neck cancer survivor, and Grammer, an endometrial cancer survivor, shared personal testimonials of the hope they both found at MD Anderson, an institution more than 1,000 miles away from home.
Awardees share passion for MD Anderson’s mission to end cancer

BY SARAH WATSON

MD Anderson has named eight innovative researchers to the second annual class of Andrew Sabin Family Fellows. The Andrew Sabin Family Fellowship Program provides $100,000 in funding per fellow over two years through a $30 million endowed gift to encourage research creativity, independent thinking and high-impact cancer research.

“it’s been exciting to observe the inaugural eight fellows as their research has progressed during the first year of the Andrew Sabin Family Fellowship Program, and we’re equally impressed with the 2017 class,” says Andrew Sabin, an MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors member since 2005. “The program now nurtures 16 brilliant minds focused on finding an end to this terrible disease. My family looks forward to seeing their impact grow exponentially over the coming year. We’re proud to know our gift already is making a difference for people suffering from cancer.”

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FEATURE

The Andrew Sabin Family Fellowship program awards up to eight cancer research fellowships annually to support research in four categories: basic science, clinical, physician-scientist and population and quantitative science. The generous funding over two years frees young researchers to pursue potentially practice-changing science rather than spend the bulk of their time writing grants.

Sabin, of East Hampton, New York, is president of Sabin Metal Corporation, the largest privately owned precious metals refiner and recycler in the country. An avid environmentalist, conservationist and wildlife enthusiast, he devotes much of his time and energy to advocating on a national level for increased cancer research funding.

2017 ANDREW SABIN FAMILY FELLOWS
Members of the second annual class of Sabin Family Fellows and their areas of focus are:

Margarida Albuquerque Almeida Santos, Ph.D., assistant professor, Epigenetics and Molecular Carcinogenesis: the role of DNA repair factors, or genome guardians, in promoting tumors

Swathi Arur, Ph.D., associate professor, Genetics: interplay of RAS signaling and small RNA biogenesis enzymes in promoting tumor progression and metastasis

Boyi Gan, Ph.D., assistant professor, Experimental Radiation Oncology: the role of energy sensing and metabolism in cancer

Clifton Fuller, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor, Radiation Oncology: developing and implementing “Big Data” approaches to imaging methodologies to treat head and neck cancers more effectively

Chad Huff, Ph.D., assistant professor, Epidemiology: understanding human evolution and the genetic basis of disease through statistical, computational and population genomics

Eugene Koay, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor, Radiation Oncology: developing and validating a method using CT scans to measure response in pancreatic cancer patients

Andrew Rhim, M.D., assistant professor, Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition: how precancerous pancreatic lesions become cancer and tumors become therapy-resistant through mutations

Jennifer Wargo, M.D., associate professor, Surgical Oncology and Genomic Medicine: delineating the role of the gut microbiome in modulating responses to cancer immunotherapy

Andrew Sabin meets with newly named fellows to learn more about their hopes and aspirations before touring a working laboratory at MD Anderson.

Continued from page 9
PUSHING THE ENVELOPE
Inaugural fellows reflect on a busy first year

From basic science to better decision-making tools, eight young researchers, now in their second year as Andrew Sabin Family Fellows, are blazing new trails in their various fields. The inaugural fellows, announced in April 2016, say the funds have enabled them to pursue meaningful projects aimed at making a difference for cancer patients and their families everywhere.

We asked: What has your Andrew Sabin Family Fellowship enabled you to accomplish?

“Look more closely at the dark region of human genomes to identify genetic variants that cannot be identified by current technologies but are particularly important to tumor development.”
— Ken Chen, Ph.D., associate professor, Bioinformatics and Computational Biology

“Conduct a project that examines the use of high flow oxygen and air to relieve shortness of breath, or air hunger, in cancer patients, a common symptom for which few treatment options are available.”
— David Hui, M.D., associate professor, Palliative, Rehabilitation and Integrative Medicine and General Oncology

“Pursue an exciting new project that will involve applying single-cell DNA sequencing technologies to breast cancer patients to understand how individual tumor cells evolve resistance to chemotherapy.”
— Nicholas Navin, Ph.D., associate professor, Genetics and Bioinformatics

“Further my study of DNA replication fork protection at in-depth molecular and biological levels to learn more about its potential as a cancer suppression mechanism across many different cancers.”
— Katharina Schlacher, Ph.D., assistant professor, Cancer Biology

“Extend my work on the role of co-occurring genetic events in KRAS-mutant lung adenocarcinoma, a prevalent and difficult-to-treat molecular subtype of non-small cell lung cancer.”
— Ferdinandas Skoulidis, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor, Thoracic/Head and Neck Medical Oncology

“Develop a project to promote personalized decision-making between mastectomy and breast reconstruction or lumpectomy followed by whole-breast irradiation for women with early breast cancer.”
— Benjamin Smith, M.D., associate professor, Radiation Oncology and Health Services Research

“Pursue an exciting project that seeks to reduce toxicity from chemotherapy and radiation treatments to improve outcomes in our cancer patients.”
— Cullen Taniguchi, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor, Radiation Oncology

“Evaluate which patients may benefit most from therapies targeting p53, the most common molecular aberration in ovarian cancer and a number of other advanced solid tumors.”
— Shannon Westin, M.D., associate professor, Gynecologic Oncology and Reproductive Medicine
GETTING TO KNOW

Holden Rushing

BY ALLISON SCHAFFER

From negotiating real estate deals to spending quality time with family to leading the Advance Team advisory board, Holden Rushing is an expert in the art of prioritizing. When asked the keys to his success on all fronts, Rushing answers, “Make time for what matters most.” That’s exactly what he’s doing as chair of the Advance Team, next-generation leaders in support of MD Anderson.

Tell us about yourself.
After college, I moved on to a lot of places for work — New York, Los Angeles and Nashville. I ended up back in Houston, married to my beautiful wife, Brooke. We have a 1-year-old, Barringer, who is just incredible. I work in commercial real estate brokerage, representing companies around the country. My wife and I love to go camping and ride bikes, and I like to surf. I also play in a couple of bands — bass, guitar and drums.

How did you come to know MD Anderson?
I’d always known about MD Anderson growing up. But when my dad was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in September 2007, I discovered what was really special about the institution. My dad initially went to another hospital. They told us, “We think we can get you another two years. Let’s hope for the best.” We didn’t like that option, so we headed to MD Anderson, where they took a completely different approach: “We’ll treat you with this course of action and, who knows, you may live another 30 years.” Ten years later, my dad’s still here. He’s one of those rare, rare statistics, a pancreatic cancer survivor! MD Anderson gave him that opportunity, and our family is happy to do whatever we can.

What do you want to accomplish as Advance Team chair?
My main goal is to increase event participation. We have many Advance Team members who are extremely passionate about raising funds and building awareness of cancer in their communities. From the Stock Grill Challenge to Put Some Skin in the Game to the Prom Party Palooza (page 6), Advance Team-run events have made a significant impact in the community. I’d like to encourage more members to come out and support their teammates. At the end of my two years, I’ll feel successful if I’ve got all 60 members saying, “I really like what we’ve done and where we’re headed.”

What message do you have for other young leaders who want to give back but may not think they have the time?
Find the things you’re passionate about. Find the one that matters most to you. A smart friend of mine told me, “You have time for the things you want to do, you just have to make the time for them.”

Born: Houston, Texas
Resides: Houston, Texas
Education:
- B.A., Political Science, Rhodes College
- MBA, Pepperdine University Graziadio School of Business
Advance Team Member: Since 2013
- Chair Elect: 2014-2016
- Chair: 2017-2019
In 2001, a budding group of young philanthropists came together to see how they could advance MD Anderson’s fight to end cancer. At that time, Kathryn Wilson, a mother of two young children, had just undergone a prophylactic mastectomy and hysterectomy. After genetic testing revealed the BRCA2 mutation, she was among the first wave of people to undergo the preventive treatment at MD Anderson. Wilson also was among the original group of Advance Team members, determined to make a difference in the lives of cancer patients and their families.

“I was invited to join the inaugural meeting of the Advance Team, which at that point hadn’t even settled on a name yet,” recalls Wilson. “We hit the ground running. We had a lot of energy and ideas and did a lot of brainstorming. We thought, ‘What can we do? Where can we make a difference?’”

Coordinating logistics for the new group was one of Fernando Yarrito’s first assignments on the job at MD Anderson. A former executive director of Development and now happily retired, Yarrito recalls the promising young group’s importance to the institution.

“There were so many ‘next-generation’ men and women already connected and committed to MD Anderson,” says Yarrito. “But they were still in the process of building their careers and families. We wanted to give them board experience and the opportunity to make a difference.”

After just one meeting, the inaugural 15 members got right to work, focusing efforts on one priority: childhood skin cancer prevention. The Advance Team successfully placed sun safety awareness programs in schools across Texas and expanded its focus areas to encompass MD Anderson’s entire pediatrics program, even playing an integral role in developing the MD Anderson Children’s Cancer Hospital brand.

“The name ‘Advance Team’ was just so fitting for this group,” says Yarrito. “They were our frontline — the first ones out in the community — telling people about MD Anderson, our mission and what we’re trying to accomplish.”

Today, Lenae Fowler of the Development Office coordinates the group, which has grown to 60 members across the nation. Last year, they raised more than $300,000, distributed more than 1,500 bottles of sunscreen and chaired more than a dozen events.

“The way the Advance Team is set up, as a small, dynamic group of individuals, everyone feels engaged and empowered to speak up and take real ownership of the good that’s accomplished and the positive that comes from our team efforts,” says Wilson. “It’s self-perpetuating and exactly what we were hoping for in that first meeting. I’m happy to see that it’s continued over the years.”
Cos Bar founder Lily Garfield attends an event with David Olsen, CEO. In celebration of National Survivors Day, the luxury cosmetics retailer donated a portion of proceeds to MD Anderson’s Moon Shots Program™.

Lily and Ron Garfield enjoy spending time with their grandchildren, from left, Felix, Chloe, Lyla, Jax and Theo.

Lily Garfield and her husband, Ron, are proud to support MD Anderson, where they were successfully treated for lymphoma.

COURAGE IN THE FACE OF CANCER
Cosmetics executive supports mission to end cancer, celebrates survivorship

BY LESLIE FRIEDMAN

Lily Garfield, 68, of Aspen, Colorado, has spent much of her life overseeing Cos Bar, a luxury multi-brand beauty retailer she founded in 1976 that has locations across the country. Lily is quite the expert in beauty and skin care. She speaks fluently of fragrance, bath and body, makeup and hair products, and of the stores’ dozens of well-known brands.

But in June 2007, she felt a lump and knew she needed a different type of expertise. A biopsy and third pathology report revealed peripheral T cell lymphoma, a rare and aggressive cancer.

Lily was determined to get the best care, no matter where. She reached out to friends in Houston for advice, and four days later she and her husband, Ron, were at MD Anderson where Lily began a clinical trial.

During her treatment, Lily observed MD Anderson at work.

“Everyone from Infectious Disease to Lymphoma to Hematology worked collectively as a team,” Lily says. “It didn’t matter what time of day or night; it was 24/7 care and was simply amazing.”

Lily has been in remission ever since.

In January 2015, Ron was diagnosed with B-cell lymphoma. He also underwent a clinical trial at MD Anderson, and he went into remission in August of that year.

Today, as a member of the MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors, Lily gives back to the institution in any way she can. On June 4, for example, in recognition of National Survivors Day, Cos Bar offered cancer survivors a free makeup application or mini facial and donated 10% of sales to the Moon Shots Program™.

“This promotion was so well-received; several people reached out to express how happy they were we did this.”

— LILY GARFIELD

“There’s absolutely no better place for when someone wants — and needs — the best possible care.”

— LILY GARFIELD
SETTING SIGHTS ON THE QUEEN BEE
Lymphoma survivor supports innovative cancer research project to find the driving force of tumor cells

BY LESLIE FRIEDMAN

In 2002, when print industry executive George Diamantis had a routine physical exam for a life insurance policy, he received unexpected news: There was a mass on his aorta, and he needed a CT scan. He went to a hospital in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where the prognosis was a slow-growing lymphoma — a 10-15% chance of beating it.

Diamantis, who recently retired as chairman of National Print Group, wanted a second opinion. His doctor, who had trained at MD Anderson, suggested he go there. Diamantis had an appointment within a week.

“I was assigned to Dr. Felipe Samaniego, who said it was the correct diagnosis, but my chances were 80%,” he says. “I asked, ‘80% living or dying?’ and he said, ‘Living!’ After a heart scan, he said it was 90%.

Running a business, Diamantis didn’t want to spend much time away, so he asked if he could get his treatment back home. Samaniego, associate professor of Lymphoma/Myeloma, described the treatment and protocol to the doctor in Chattanooga and shipped the drug to him for next-day delivery.

Diamantis had three or four treatments and 24 rounds of radiation, but with his trust in MD Anderson, he decided to return to Houston. He went through 12 rounds of chemotherapy and took Rituxan before Samaniego pronounced him completely clear of the cancer.

“Everyone at MD Anderson was encouraging, hopeful and upbeat,” says Diamantis, of McDonald, Tennessee. “What sets MD Anderson apart is its professionalism and understanding of what people are going through.”

He and his wife, Jane, are longtime supporters of Samaniego’s research and recently committed $60,000 to his “queen bee” study, which aims to find the cause of tumor growth.

“Just as killing the queen bee leads to the demise of the hive, destroying the cancer cells should stop the tumor from renewing itself. Curing cancer through the queen bee theory is the driver of many tumor models,” says Samaniego. “George and Jane’s donation will generate enough information to get us more grants, which are critical in our efforts to find a cure.”

ROSE SALE HELPS KNOCK OUT SARCOMA
Sally Kingsbury’s love of gardening inspires annual fundraising effort toward finding a cure

BY LESLIE FRIEDMAN

In addition to being a loving wife, devoted mom, dedicated high school teacher and motivating aerobics instructor, Sally Kingsbury was a master gardener. She spent many hours nurturing her garden and her prized Knock Out® roses.

Sally and her husband, Tim, raised two sons, Klint and Kliff, in New Braunfels, Texas. She was adored by students and colleagues alike.

In 2003, Sally, at age 51, was diagnosed with soft tissue sarcoma.

She completed treatments at MD Anderson and absolutely believed she would beat the disease. Eight months later, the cancer metastasized to her lung. Family and friends recall how Sally fought with dignity and grit until her death in December 2005.

Her love of gardening inspired family and friends to form the Sally M. Kingsbury Sarcoma Research Foundation, or Knock Out Sarcoma, in 2007 to help fund research to find a cure. “The group sells colorful Knock Out® roses each spring, and has since gotten involved with more fundraising opportunities: the Tour de Gruene bike race in November, an Audi golf tournament in San Antonio in June and the Comal County Cowboy Breakfast in New Braunfels in September, as well as securing percentages of Kendra Scott jewelry sales in February and Vera Bradley product sales in July to support the cause. Overall, the organization has raised $325,000 for sarcoma research at MD Anderson.

“Those in New Braunfels who know the Kingsbury family loved and respected Sally for her optimistic outlook, her value system and her work ethic,” says Nora Linares-Moeller, her sister-in-law and president of the foundation.

Sally was a true inspiration and positive influence for all. She leaves a legacy of hope for patients with sarcoma and making sure the disease is one day “knocked out.”
MARY HARBERT STROMBERG was in the thick of her junior year at Clemson University when a sharp pain near her right hip bone stopped her in her tracks. After an ultrasound revealed a mass, she immediately called her mother, Glennys, who turned to her own mother, Craig Cowles. The three-time cancer survivor insisted that her granddaughter go to MD Anderson, where doctors found no evidence of cancer. Stromberg's misdiagnosis is one of countless such cases seen at MD Anderson.

It was a Tuesday when I started experiencing a lot of pain on my right side. It kept getting progressively worse, so I headed to the doctor, thinking it might be appendicitis. The doctor poked and prodded, then suggested I get an ultrasound. The scan revealed a complex mass.

At the advice of my grandmother, my mom said, ‘Let's be extra careful and go to MD Anderson.’ Going somewhere that says ‘Cancer Center’ is definitely intimidating. But I had been to MD Anderson with my grandmother so many times, and I remembered how nice the people were and quickly felt at ease.

Upon meeting Dr. Pedro Ramirez and his team, I knew I was in the right place. My doctor in South Carolina seemed more frightened than I was. But the MD Anderson team has seen it all.

They said in a very calming way, ‘First, we’re going to figure this out, and we’ll go from there.’

After a full exam, Dr. Ramirez told me there was no complex mass at all. It was a normal, benign, regular cyst that commonly occurs, and mine just happened to twist in a strange way that was causing the pain. He told me I was OK.

My mom, grandmother and I are all on the same page. It’s scary how far people will go without asking questions, getting second opinions and really knowing what’s going on.

My first doctor recommended a hysterectomy — at 21 years old! And then to find out I had no evidence of disease. I feel lucky to have gotten that second opinion and hope others will do the same.