

# PROMISE

FALL 2011

A publication for friends of MD Anderson

## TIME, TALENTS & TREASURES:

MD Anderson  
Cancer Center  
Board of Visitors

## U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT:

MD Anderson  
again No. 1  
in cancer care

## Making sense of the biological **Data Deluge**

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

MDAnderson  
Cancer Center

Making Cancer History®

**Bioinformatics corrals information overload to create blueprint for personalized cancer medicine**

# Data Deluge

By Dawn Dorsey

**T**hanks to rapidly advancing technology and groundbreaking research, the past few years have brought fast and furious progress to understanding the molecules that make up the human body.

But the flip side of this phenomenal race is that it's produced data so quickly that researchers are looking to information technology to help them optimize results.

As discoveries continue to mushroom, scientists are scrambling to find ways to scrutinize data and bring it into the "real world" to help predict, prevent and treat disease. MD Anderson's Department of Bioinformatics and Computational Biology is at the forefront of learning to translate and use this flurry of information to move closer to a personalized approach to cancer.

"Some people thought sequencing the human genome was an end in itself," says John N. Weinstein, M.D., Ph.D., professor and chair of the department. "And it was. But it was also just the beginning. There's been an explosion of data about the body's genes, proteins and other molecules. For the first time in medical history we're generating biological information in the laboratory faster than we can analyze or interpret it on our computers."

## Navigating a universe of data

The scientific discipline called bioinformatics uses customized statistical approaches and supercomputers to relieve the bottleneck caused by quickly escalating discovery. Leading-edge techniques and technologies enable highly trained experts to sift through genetic data searching for information on how to design cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment plans based on each person's unique molecular makeup. The scientific niche is built on four pillars of expertise: biology, statistics, clinical medicine and computer science.

"The bottom line of bioinformatics at MD Anderson is learning how to personalize cancer medicine," Weinstein says. "If we can generate molecular portraits of cancer, we'll be



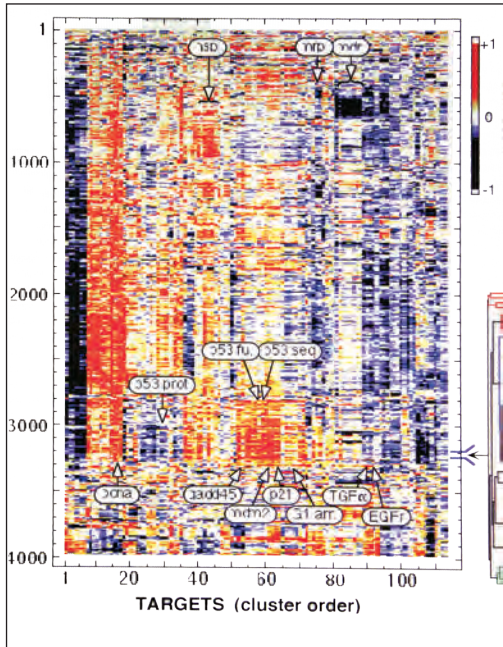
With laboratories generating an overwhelming amount of biological data that could hold the key to personalized cancer therapies, it's understandable that John N. Weinstein, M.D., Ph.D., chair of MD Anderson's Department of Bioinformatics and Computational Biology, often finds himself wrapped up in his work. *Photo by John Everett*

better able to choose the right therapy for each patient or, better yet, prevent cancers from developing in the first place."

Weinstein paints a striking visual picture to show the mind-boggling possibilities and the

incredible numbers of molecular components in human biology.

"Stretched end to end, the DNA in a single human's body would circle the equator 455,000 times, the equivalent of 60 round trips to the



Almost two decades ago, John N. Weinstein, M.D., Ph.D., introduced a way to reduce the masses of molecular data to something humans can visualize: a compact, color-coded clustered heat map. One of his early heat maps, published in the journal *Science*, reduced 28 feet of almost microscopic print on the relationship between genes and cancer drugs.

**“There’s been an explosion of data about the body’s genes, proteins and other molecules. For the first time in medical history we’re generating biological information in the laboratory faster than we can analyze or interpret it on our computers.”**

— John N. Weinstein, M.D., Ph.D.,  
Chair, Department of Bioinformatics  
and Computational Biology

sun,” he says. “One mistake — a mutation — at an unlucky spot anywhere in that length can lead to cancer. Our challenge is to understand how mutations and other genomic aberrations happen so we can try to prevent them and know what to do about them if we can’t.”

### Leading, collaborating, discovering

One of the pioneers of molecular profiling for personalized cancer therapy, Weinstein has a personal stake in cancer research. His mother, his grandmother and a number of close friends died from the disease. MD Anderson recruited the renowned scholar, investigator and inventor in 2008 from the National Cancer Institute, where he had spent more than three decades. His 260 publications include 11 as first author in the prestigious journal *Science*.

Since Weinstein’s arrival, the department has grown rapidly in response to MD Anderson’s expanding needs. In the past two years, it has successfully recruited eight young star faculty members from top institutions around the country, as well as more than two dozen analysts, computer scientists and fellows to support research throughout the institution.

In 2009-2010, the analysts provided bioinformatics support for more than 400 research projects of more than 150 principal

investigators in more than 40 MD Anderson departments. The team received a five-year, \$8.3 million grant from the federally funded Cancer Genome Atlas in 2009.

Private philanthropy is playing a highly significant role to support bioinformatics and computational biology at the institution, thereby helping advance a better understanding of cancer and the ability to control it. The H.A. and Mary K. Chapman Charitable Foundations, two charitable entities established in memory of philanthropists Mary and Allen Chapman of Tulsa, Okla., made a generous gift of \$1.75 million to support the Chapman Fund for Bioinformatics in Personalized Cancer Therapy under Weinstein’s direction. The bioinformatics program also has received an anonymous gift of \$250,000 as well as numerous smaller donations. Most recently, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation committed a \$2.5 million grant in honor of Michael Dell’s mother, MD Anderson Board of Visitors member Lorraine Dell of Houston. The Lorraine Dell Program in Bioinformatics for the Personalization of Cancer Medicine will build a fully equipped, multidisciplinary team devoted to analyzing and interpreting molecular profiles.

Stepping away from their computers and labs, statistical analysts in the department collaborate closely with clinical and basic science researchers in many areas across MD Anderson. They work side by side with biomedical scientists and clinicians to determine efficient and effective approaches to exploring the new data generated every day. The analysts lend valuable expertise, helping colleagues with grant submissions and data analyses, answering researchers’ questions and discussing issues during weekly drop-in clinics.

### A future paved with potential

Moving forward, the department will continue to investigate new ways to design and use computer technology to interpret research. By building collaborations within MD Anderson and the broader research community, departmental scientists will expand their knowledge and learn to identify the important questions to ask when examining the torrents of data. And, they’ll continue to develop their expertise by sharing knowledge with graduate students, bioinformatics trainees, biomedical scientists and clinicians.

Weinstein sees exciting potential for MD Anderson to take giant steps toward eliminating cancer by learning to leverage the tremendous level of research at the institution.

“With the largest, most vigorous and most honored clinical cancer research program in the world, MD Anderson is uniquely positioned to seize this opportunity and make major advances in personalized cancer therapy,” he says. “Our research provides an engine for progress against cancer that’s simply unmatched anywhere in the world.”

## A message from Ronald DePinho, M.D.



To take the reins from a great leader in modern cancer medicine is a thrilling, daunting and solemn responsibility. Under Dr. John Mendelsohn’s leadership, MD Anderson has become the premier cancer hospital in the world. What an honor it is to join the thousands of scientists, physicians, nurses, staff, volunteers and generous supporters whose dedication has made the institution the place with the best hope for cure.

In 1998, my dad died of colon cancer. I was at the pinnacle of scientific achievement. But as I looked at my father on his deathbed, I recognized that that just wasn’t good enough. I reflected on my family’s story of pain and the stories of others who have lost loved ones to this terrible disease. Since that day, I’ve focused all of my efforts on changing those stories once and for all.

I believe that MD Anderson, with its scientific and clinical excellence and singular focus on cancer, is in a position to do just that. With the continued philanthropic support of those who share our passion, we’ll make major progress in preventing, detecting and treating cancer. Together, we can do great good for humanity.

As my wife, Dr. Lynda Chin, and our children settle in, we look forward to meeting friends who are committed to MD Anderson’s mission. On behalf of my new colleagues, thank you for joining us in Making Cancer History®.

## PROMISE

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**ON THE COVER:** Computer-generated tools such as clustered heat maps help MD Anderson’s John N. Weinstein, M.D., Ph.D., create molecular portraits of cancer that can lead to personalized therapies.

Photo illustration by John Everett and Kellye B. Sanford  
This publication was not printed at state expense.

# MD Anderson ranks No. 1 in cancer care

**F**or the fifth straight year, MD Anderson is the leading hospital in the nation for cancer care, according to U.S. News & World Report's annual "Best Hospitals" survey.

MD Anderson has ranked No. 1 eight times in the past decade. The institution has been named one of the top two hospitals for cancer care in the United States since the survey began 22 years ago.

The rankings are based on a complex mix of criteria that includes key technologies, nurse-to-patient staffing ratios and the availability of patient services such as genetic testing/counseling, translation services, wound



management, palliative care and others. The methodology also weighs reputation with board-certified physicians from around the nation, disease outcomes and patient safety.

"This top national ranking acknowledges the signature care that our 18,000 employees deliver and advance every day," says Thomas W. Burke, M.D., executive vice president and physician-in-chief. "We're honored to be recognized among so many great cancer centers in the nation. Our faculty, staff and volunteers share this accolade with our patients, who inspire us all every day."

## Komen for the Cure® Houston Names Grant Recipients

Banu Arun, M.D., associate professor of Breast Medical Oncology and Clinical Cancer Prevention, and Arlene Nazario, M.D., clinical associate professor, Department of General Oncology, were two of 22 grant recipients honored at the 2011 IMPACT Awards luncheon in June. The Houston Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure® established the luncheon to spotlight grant recipients and honor members of the community who are dedicated to eradicating breast cancer. Komen for the Cure® has given a total of \$3.27 million to southeast Texas organizations that provide lifesaving services to uninsured and low-income people for breast cancer screening, education and treatment.



Hosts Gerald Hines, from left, and Barbara Hines with Anne Mendelsohn and John Mendelsohn, M.D. Photos by Riccardo Savi

## Pasqualini wins international cancer research award

Renata Pasqualini, Ph.D., professor of Genitourinary Medical Oncology, is the 2011 recipient of the Sergio Lombroso Award in Cancer Research. She accepted the award in June at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, Israel. The award, which comes with a \$20,000 prize, goes every two years to an internationally distinguished scientist, medical researcher or physician who has made significant contributions to understanding the causes and mechanisms of cancer or to its diagnostics and therapy.



Renata Pasqualini, Ph.D.

## Evening of Aspen ambience

By Sarah Watson

**A** late afternoon rain did nothing to dampen the festive atmosphere at Barbara and Gerald Hines' Aug. 1 reception at their Aspen home on the banks of the Roaring Fork River. As the skies cleared, more than 200 MD Anderson friends and supporters gathered to salute Anne Mendelsohn and John Mendelsohn, M.D., on the eve of the 13th annual Making Cancer History® Seminar at the Aspen Institute. Barbara Hines' painting "Poppy Fields and Mountains II" (at right) was a focal point as the Mendelsohns reflected on their extraordinary journey during his 15-year tenure as the institution's third president. Later, an auction of the painting generated lively bidding. John Paul DeJoria made the winning bid of \$10,000, which will support the Anne and John Mendelsohn



Personalized Cancer Therapy Fund.

The free educational event at the Aspen Institute featured presentations by Mendelsohn; Laurence Cooper, M.D., Ph.D.; and Jeffrey N. Myers, M.D., Ph.D.

Cancer survivor Shelby Robin shared her experiences in overcoming Ewing's sarcoma and becoming a nurse at MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital, where she received treatment as a child.

# Passion + brains = Rogers Award

By Michelle Moore

Lorna McNeill, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Health Disparities Research at MD Anderson, is the recipient of the 2011 Julie and Ben Rogers Award for Excellence in Prevention.

The \$10,000 award, which rotates annually among the areas of patient care, research, education, prevention and administration, recognizes employees who consistently demonstrate excellence in their work and dedication to MD Anderson's mission to eliminate cancer. Regina Rogers, a senior member of the MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors, established the award 25 years ago in honor of her parents, the late Julie and Ben Rogers, and in appreciation of the treatment her brother and her mother received at the institution.

McNeill, who joined MD Anderson in 2006, co-directs the Center for Community-Engaged Translational Research at the Duncan Family Institute for Cancer Prevention and Risk Assessment. She also serves on the faculty of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

Her colleagues and friends describe her as a force of energy for change who combines the qualities of leadership, passion and brains.

McNeill is lead investigator on a cohort study called Project CHURCH, designed to research and learn about cancer risk in African-Americans to improve cancer-related outcomes in this population. The collaborative effort between MD Anderson and the local community includes the largest United Methodist church in the nation.

"Some say that community-based research is messy or unscientific. I say that it's neither of those," says McNeill. "Rather, it's the pathway toward truly eliminating health disparities in cancer risk and outcomes."

Video: [youtube.com/mygivingtomdanderson](http://youtube.com/mygivingtomdanderson)



Lorna McNeill, Ph.D., who recently accepted the 2011 Julie and Ben Rogers Award for Excellence in Prevention, focuses on improving outcomes among African-Americans, who have the highest incidence and shortest survival rate of any racial group for most cancers. Photo by Barry Smith



A cancer-free Hilton W. Graham II, who underwent a stem cell transplant to overcome Hodgkin's lymphoma, cherishes the time he spends with his daughter, Betsy. Photo courtesy of Hilton W. Graham II

## Survivors Say

Hilton W. Graham II, of Richmond, Va., has been a member of MD Anderson's Advance Team since 2010, serving on the education committee. He is the founder of The Graham Consulting Group, LLC, a full-service political and public affairs consulting firm.

“As many know, there is nothing scarier than battling cancer. In September 2009, I had a stem cell transplant in hopes of beating my second bout in 10 years with Hodgkin's lymphoma. I was 30 when I had the transplant and had an 8-month-old daughter at home. I didn't

get to see her very much for the first year of her life. But thanks to MD Anderson, I'm now as happy and healthy as I can be, not to mention the proud father of a beautiful 2-and-a-half-year-old girl. I love every moment I spend with her. Staring cancer in the face makes you appreciate and recognize some of the things in your life that require more attention than most of us realize. It awakens your spirits and aligns your perspective. While the road was not pleasant, the outcome is beautiful. I'm thankful to MD Anderson for helping me get there.”

Promise invites cancer survivors to share their reflections. Email [Promise@mdanderson.org](mailto:Promise@mdanderson.org).

## DONORS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

# The Board of Visitors: Making a priceless contribution

By Michelle Moore

Each fall more than 200 men and women — business and community leaders from across the country — convene at MD Anderson to devote their energies, expertise and resources to a cause about which they are passionate. They are the MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors (BOV), the personification of the institution's mission to eradicate cancer.

The BOV is an active group of volunteers who work as a body made of many parts, all with unique functions, yet dependent on each other to work effectively as a whole. The BOV originated in the 1950s with three main objectives:

- Organize and pursue educational functions to create and disseminate knowledge of health
- Promote, organize, conduct, support and encourage medical and scientific investigations that may result in health benefits to mankind
- Foster and promote growth, progress and development of research, education and graduate study in medicine and its related fundamental sciences at MD Anderson and encourage gifts for purposes agreeable to The University of Texas System Board of Regents.

Nancy B. Loeffler of San Antonio is the current chair and the first woman to hold that post. She joins a list of notables, including former president George H.W. Bush, who've consistently led the membership to meet and exceed its goals.

"As chair of the institution's Board of Visitors, I challenge anyone to find a more dedicated, energized group of people," says Loeffler. "It's a privilege and an honor to lead this fine group and to serve this institution, which has such a powerful mission."

Tasked with assisting the Development Office in raising funds, awareness and support for MD Anderson, the BOV has been instrumental in driving the success the institution's research and patient care programs, says Patrick B. Mulvey, vice president for development at MD Anderson. Gifts of time, talents and resources also are crucial to the institution's mission to eradicate cancer.

### Time and again

As the old saying goes, time is money. It's certainly a commodity traded generously throughout the BOV. Already packed schedules somehow accommodate time commitments such as the annual meeting each fall, numerous events throughout the year and various committees targeting key areas within the institution.

One of the board's four standing committees, for example, is the Events Committee, co-chaired

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— Nancy B. Loeffler,  
Chair of the MD Anderson  
Cancer Center Board of Visitors

by Sheridan Williams of Houston and Kit Moncrief of Fort Worth. This committee's input is crucial to events held as effective fundraisers and "friend-raisers" for MD Anderson. The recent 70th anniversary celebration at Minute Maid Park in Houston raised \$4.3 million and boosted nationwide awareness of the institution's research and patient care initiatives over seven decades.

The success of these events depends on an enormous amount of time and effort, which in turn has made many of these events a staple in the Houston community and beyond. Polo on the Prairie, held annually at the Musselman Brothers' Lazy 3 Ranch in Albany, Texas, is one of the longest running events in MD Anderson history, celebrating 25 years this past April. The event has raised close to \$4 million to date, thanks to countless volunteer hours on the part of BOV member Henry Musselman and his wife, Melinda, along with BOV member Mary Anne McCloud and her husband, Austin, and a host of family, friends and supporters.

"For the past 30 years, I've been honored and privileged to serve as a board member and to witness the level of care given to all patients," says Regina Rogers, whose relationship with MD Anderson began in the 1960s when her brother underwent thyroid cancer surgery at MD Anderson. "It's indeed fulfilling to know that my time and our family's resources have benefited an institution that has become the No. 1 cancer center in the world."

A Conversation With a Living Legend® is a luncheon-interview format that's had success in Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Atlanta and Washington, D.C. A Las Vegas version, co-chaired by Rosey Park of Cleveland, Ohio, is the newest edition, debuting in November 2011, with football legend Franco Harris to be interviewed by broadcast journalist Larry King. Lyda Hill, Robert Nichols and the late Charles Simmons originated the "Living Legend" concept



Fiscal Year 2012 BOV officers are, from left: Nancy B. Loeffler, past chair; Harry J. Longwell, chair elect; and Melvyn N. Klein, vice chair and membership chair. Photo by John L. ...

## TIME, TA AND TRE

### Past Board of V

Ernest H. Cockrell  
Marc J. Shapiro  
Peter R. Coneway  
George H.W. Bush  
Forrest E. Hogle  
Robert R. Onstead\*  
Red McCombs  
Randall Meyer

Richard J.V.  
John H. Dur  
Edwin L. Co  
Robert A. Mo  
Dan C. Willi  
O. Pendleton  
T. Boone Pic  
Nat S. Roger



Ernest H. Cockrell, immediate past; Nancy B. Loeffler, chair; Development Office chair and board development chair. Photo by Everett

# TALENTS TREASURES

## Visitors Chairs

- Tom Johnson\*
- John A. McAn
- John S. Cox
- Robert A. Mosbacher Sr.\*
- John A. Stams\*
- John Thomas\*
- John A. Wickens
- John A. ...
- J. Kenneth Jamieson\*
- Ben F. Love\*
- John S. Dunn Sr.\*
- Thomas D. Anderson\*
- Leroy Jeffers\*
- James E. Anderson\*

\*Since deceased

in Dallas in 1989. Collectively, the Living Legend events have raised more than \$11 million for the institution.

### Talent to spare

BOV members are encouraged to bring personal career expertise, skills and talents to the fight against cancer. A case in point is Atlanta Tom Johnson, former chief executive officer of CNN News Group. Johnson, who co-chairs the Public Affairs Committee along with Houstonian Shirley Coskey, has been instrumental in helping secure honorees for Living Legend events, even stepping in on occasion to serve as master of ceremonies and onstage interviewer. Steve Wasserman, vice president and general manager of the NBC affiliate in West Palm Beach, Fla., also supports the Public Affairs Committee, using his expertise to help bridge the gap between MD Anderson and the general public.

“I use my 45 years of experience in journalism and government to help battle cancer,” says Johnson. “Those experiences enabled me to arrange editorial board meetings for Dr. Mendelsohn with the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, the New York Times and PBS during his presidency, as well as use my contacts in media, business and government. I want to help in every way I can to defeat cancer.”

### Treasures untold

BOV members are generous with their financial resources as well. Approximately 75% contribute financially to ever-challenging capital campaign efforts. The BOV has spearheaded five major campaign initiatives. The current Making Cancer History®: The Campaign to Transform Cancer Care, chaired by Harry J. Longwell of Dallas, has completed a \$1.2 billion goal. Its original \$1 billion goal was met two years early thanks to enthusiastic BOV involvement.

The BOV Development Committee, co-chaired by Bill A. Monteleone of New Orleans and Gene Rainbolt of Oklahoma City, as well as the Strategic Advisory Committees and its advisory groups (Children’s Cancer Hospital, Clinical Business, Global Business, Intellectual Properties and Texas Medical Center/City Interactions), also help ensure funding for crucial areas of cancer research. Their collective goal is to make a difference in the lives of cancer patients around the world.

“Philanthropy is a key component in the lifeblood of MD Anderson, enabling the institution to accomplish the extraordinary, which sets it apart from other institutions,” says Longwell. “The Board of Visitors is vital to the institution’s philanthropic efforts, contributing approximately one third of the funds raised and assisting the Development Office in generating other contributions. This is a key role for BOV members in addition to their other contributions of advice, counsel and participation.”

The BOV is an integral part of the success and achievements at MD Anderson. Through both tangible and intangible resources, the BOV continues to lead the way in helping MD Anderson on the journey to Making Cancer History®.

## MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors Campaign Initiatives

### Fulfill The Promise:

- Chair: Ben F. Love\*
- Original time: September 1993-August 1997
- Actual time: September 1993-December 1995
- Original goal: \$151 million
- Total raised: \$151.5 million



### Cynthia and George Mitchell

#### Basic Sciences Research Building:

- Chair: Jack Blanton Sr.
- Original time: May 1998-August 2001
- Actual time: September 1998-August 2001
- Original goal: \$75 million
- Total raised: \$75 million



### George and Barbara Bush

#### Endowment for Innovative Cancer Research:

- Chairs: Sue and Tim Timken and Robert A. Mosbacher Sr.\*
- 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration (George H.W. Bush) 1998-1999
- 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration (MD Anderson) 2001
- 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration (George H.W. Bush) 2004
- Total raised: \$50 million



### South Campus Research Initiative:

- Chair: Ernest H. Cockrell
- Original time: January 2005-December 2009
- Actual time: January 2005-September 2007
- Original goal: \$100 million
- Total raised: \$135 million

### Making Cancer History®: The Campaign to Transform Cancer Care

- Chair: Harry J. Longwell
- Original time: September 2007-August 2012
- Actual time: September 2007-August 2011
- Original goal: \$1 billion
- Total raised: In excess of \$1.2 billion
- \*Since deceased

**It's in the genes:  
key to personalized care  
for head and neck cancer**

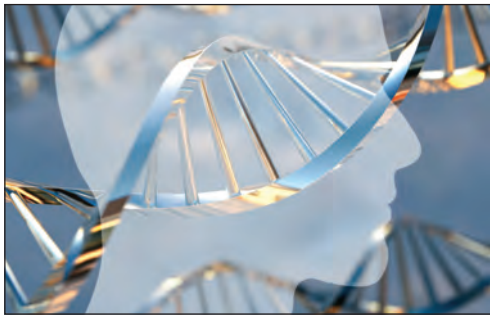
The first comprehensive studies of genetic variation in head and neck squamous cell cancers have uncovered mutations that may help refine treatment, say MD Anderson researchers.

"These findings should help us better treat patients by allowing us to take a more personalized approach," says Jeffrey N. Myers, M.D., Ph.D., professor in MD Anderson's Department of Head and Neck Surgery and co-senior author of one of the papers.

MD Anderson scientists teamed with Baylor College of Medicine and the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center, concluding that prevention, risk assessment and early detection remain the best weapons against head and neck cancer.

Two grants to MD Anderson supported the MD Anderson-BCM team: an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 grant from the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research and a grant from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas.

Other funding came from the National Cancer Institute, American Association for Cancer Research Stand Up to Cancer Dream Team Translational Research Grant, the Virginia and D.K. Ludwig Fund for Cancer Research and MD Anderson's Head and Neck Specialized Program in Research Excellence (SPORE).



Composite illustration from iStockphoto images

**Help for heavy smokers**

**Screening program offers access to other prevention services**

By **Katrina Burton**

**T**he National Lung Screening Trial (NLST), funded by the National Cancer Institute, is the driving force behind MD Anderson's new program enabling current and former heavy smokers to receive more effective lung cancer screening.

Based on NLST findings, MD Anderson's Lung Cancer Screening Program involves experts in thoracic surgery, radiology, pulmonary and clinical cancer prevention seeking better lung cancer detection, treatment and education for people at high risk for the disease. Computed tomography (CT) screening is available to current or former smokers 50 years or older who have smoked the equivalent of one pack of cigarettes a day for at least 20 years. The program also offers access to other services through MD Anderson's Cancer Prevention Center, including low-cost programs to help smokers quit.

"Our program is unique because we do more than a comprehensive CT lung screening exam," says Therese Bevers, M.D., medical director of the Cancer Prevention Center. "We offer preventive options to help reduce patients' risk for cancer and guide people through the diagnostic evaluation and, if needed, treatment."

Prior to the NLST, lung cancer had shown

no benefit from screening because standard chest X-rays had not been detecting cancers early enough. NLST findings recently published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* revealed a 20% reduction in lung cancer deaths among participants who received low-dose helical CT scans compared with those undergoing standard chest X-rays.

MD Anderson was one of 33 sites involved in the national trial and one of 10 sites that collected biomarkers to use in NLST secondary trials.

"This is a major finding for lung cancer patients and health care policy in the United States," says Reginald Munden, M.D., a professor in the Department of Diagnostic Radiology and lead investigator at MD Anderson on the trial.

Lung cancer screening isn't recommended for all smokers and former smokers because of risks including radiation exposure and false positives that may require additional testing and discomfort.

"Now that we have scientific proof that screening a specific high-risk group can reduce mortality in lung cancer patients, the screening benefits outweigh the risks for those people," says Bevers, MD Anderson co-investigator on the trial.

Cost can be a barrier to screening, because insurance companies don't cover the expense. The trial includes a cost-effective analysis, expected to be released later this year, comparing the cost of lung cancer care to the cost of covering lung cancer screening.

To schedule an appointment, please contact askMDAnderson at 877-632-6789.

**Regulatory T cell off-switch plays role in immune response**

A team led by MD Anderson reports in the journal *Nature Medicine* that a regulatory T cell expressing three specific genes shuts down the mass production of antibodies launched by the immune system to attack invaders.

"We've identified a molecular pathway that creates a specialized regulatory T cell that suppresses the reaction of germinal centers. That's where immune system T cells and B cells interact to swiftly produce large quantities of antibodies," says paper senior author Chen Dong, Ph.D., professor in the

Department of Immunology and director of the Center for Inflammation and Cancer.

The discovery of the germinal center off-switch has potential implications for cancer and autoimmune diseases.

"In some types of cancer, the presence of many regulatory T cells is associated with poor prognosis," he says. "The theory is those cells suppress an immune system response in the tumor's microenvironment that otherwise might have attacked the cancer."

Hitting the regulatory T cell off-switch

might help against lymphomas and autoimmune diseases, says Dong, while blocking it could permit an immune response against other cancers.

The team received research funding from the National Institutes of Health, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, MD Anderson, the American Heart Association, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Clinical Scientist Development Award and the China Ministry of Science and Technology Protein Science Key Research Project.



## AMONG FRIENDS

# Suitable for framing

Cancer survivor savors photo-worthy moments thanks to positive MD Anderson experience

By Michelle Moore

Harold Baquet is a modern Renaissance man with plenty of faith to spare. A photographer from New Orleans, Baquet refuses to let anything come between him and his dreams, especially not cancer.

“When I was first diagnosed with colon cancer, it was post-Hurricane Katrina and health care in New Orleans was terrible. I tried to book a colonoscopy for a year,” says Baquet. “When I finally did, it was discovered that I had cancer and it had already spread to my liver.”

With little hope offered by local doctors, Baquet refused to believe the worst. His faith and the prayers of his family, friends and community gave him strength.

“It was humbling,” says Baquet. “It’s nothing to be described or modeled scientifically or mathematically. It’s just love.”

That love, he says, was also evident in the hearts of the volunteers and staff at MD Anderson.

“I was thankful to find MD Anderson. While in recovery, the previous doctor in New Orleans told my family that I had three to 18 months to live. A consulting physician refused to see my case, citing the same statistics,” he says. “I told my wife, Cheron, we should get a second opinion, and she was nice enough not to tell me that was the second opinion. From the beginning, she believed a liver re-section would save my life and the person and place to do that was Dr. Curley at MD Anderson.”

Steven Curley, M.D., professor of Surgical Oncology, was working with patients who had metastatic liver cancer resulting from the spread of cancer from other parts of the body, as Baquet’s had.

“Dr. Curley didn’t blow us off. He gave us hope,” says Baquet. “He’s a rock star, and when he walks down the hall, I hear a rock anthem. Meeting him was important and powerful.”

This was, however, not the first time that cancer had struck Baquet in such a personal way. He lost his 3-year-old son, Harold Jr., to leukemia, as well as his father and brother to lung cancer. His sister is a colon cancer survivor.

“You see it all around you, and you feel like you’re just waiting your turn,” says Baquet.

“The one thing I didn’t anticipate was being able to fight it so well.”

At 53, Baquet looks back on a varied career path. He’s been a weapons mechanic in the Louisiana Air National Guard, a licensed electrician, a scuba instructor and the official photographer for the first black mayor of the City of New Orleans.

Baquet finds his greatest passion through the lens of a camera. He currently works at Loyola University New Orleans, where he’s been university photographer for the past two decades.

“When I lost little Harold, my priorities became different,” says Baquet. “I was willing to sacrifice and starve to do what I wanted in life and follow my passions. I was interested in photography from a young age, and I’ve been fortunate to pursue it as a career.”

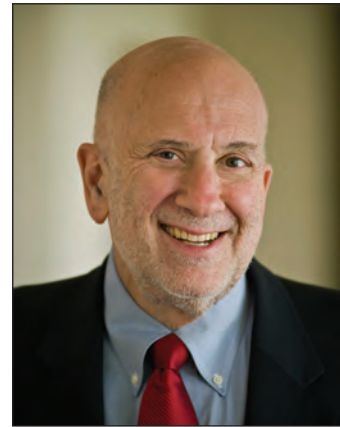
He describes himself as a “people photographer” who enjoys the opportunity to share in others’ beautiful memories.

“People are the noblest, most worthy subject there is,” he says. “I still get excited that they let me into their lives.”

Baquet says he owes his ability to enjoy those photo-worthy moments to the people at MD Anderson.

“The culture at MD Anderson fosters an incredible community of healers,” says Baquet. “Every encounter with people on staff affirms that you’re loved, and I don’t use that word lightly. It’s something amazing. From volunteers and receptionists to radiology technicians and phlebotomists, I was allowed to maintain my dignity. There’s a mission and a grand strategy.

You can move a mountain with this kind of organization.”

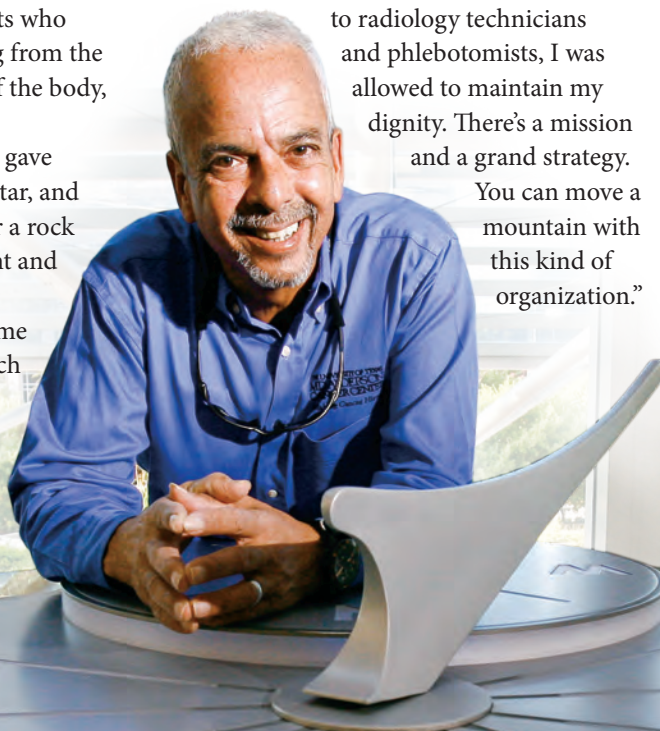


## iPromise

Michael R. Levy, founder and former publisher of *Texas Monthly* magazine, has been a member of the MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors since 1985. In 1989, he received the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation Award for Excellence in Media. Levy resides in Austin.

“Whose life has not been directly or indirectly touched by cancer? Six women in my family, including my mother and my sister, have had breast cancer. The disease has always been on my mind, especially given that I have three daughters and two granddaughters, and that I worked with a predominantly female staff during my 35 years as publisher of *Texas Monthly*. A foundation established by my late uncle in 2004 has given financial support to breast cancer prevention research at MD Anderson. This past year I met Dr. Banu Arun, associate professor of Breast Medical Oncology and Clinical Cancer Prevention and co-director of Clinical Cancer Genetics at MD Anderson. With great passion and excitement, Dr. Arun told me about her research of curcumin (turmeric) as an agent for preventing breast cancer. Because this past May I became “Mikee Medicare,” I threw myself a 65th birthday bash in the original *Austin City Limits* studio. I insisted that the only present I wanted and would accept was that my guests consider supporting Dr. Arun’s research. After Dr. Arun spoke onstage, my family and friends understood that they were not simply at another party, but in the presence of a health care professional of the highest order who, along with her colleagues at MD Anderson, is committed to Making Cancer History®. That’s a commitment I’m honored to share.”

Do you promise? Tell us why you’re committed to Making Cancer History® by sending an email to [Promise@mdanderson.org](mailto:Promise@mdanderson.org).



Harold Baquet of New Orleans says a simple coping mechanism has helped him through losing his son to cancer, surviving Hurricane Katrina and dealing with his own cancer diagnosis: “It’s just love.” Photo by John Everett

## Cattlemen for Cancer Research Lassos First Research Hero

By Victor Scott

Receiving a breast cancer diagnosis in January 2000 was a terrifying déjà vu for 38-year-old Joann Harkins. She had watched her mother die from the disease at age 43 and feared she would suffer the same fate. Her fears gave way to hope when she arrived at MD Anderson.

Harkins found herself under the care of Robert C. Bast, M.D., vice president for Translational Research and professor of Experimental Therapeutics, and advance practice nurse Mary Hernandez. They launched a strategic attack against Harkins' condition: stage 3B inflammatory breast cancer with lymph node involvement.

Harkins learned that hers is the deadliest type of breast cancer, with a survival rate of only 15% with standard treatment. She quickly entered a research protocol treatment that increased her survival rate to 45%.

Today Harkins is cancer-free.

Having grown up in Central Texas, she was aware of the Cattlemen for Cancer Research, an organization founded by a group of compassionate and generous Central Texans. Cattlemen for Cancer Research is dedicated to supporting cancer research at MD Anderson's Michale E. Keeling Center for Comparative Medicine and Research near Bastrop. Harkins began supporting the organization's annual fundraising auction and in 2007 was named the Cattlemen for Cancer Research Honorary Cancer Survivor.

Harkins never forgot her lifesaving treatment at MD Anderson or the staff who stood by her side. When she heard about the Cattlemen for Cancer Research Hero Award, established in 2010 to honor an MD Anderson clinician or scientist for outstanding contributions to the care of patients from Central Texas, Harkins followed her heart and nominated Bast, also recognizing Hernandez as part of an "awesome team."

"They were always very kind and caring," says Harkins.

Bast is humble when asked about the honor and insists on sharing it with Hernandez.

"Mary and I are deeply grateful to the Cattlemen for Cancer Research," he says. "But in truth, our patients are the heroes and heroines. Their courage, endurance, equanimity and good humor inspire us every day."



Face painting is one of many family activities to enjoy at the annual Haynie Spirit Festival and BBQ Fundraiser, which this year raised more than \$8,000. Photo courtesy of the Haynie Spirit Bone Cancer Foundation. Below: Jennifer Haynie's sister, Katelyn, and her mother, Mary, are grateful for the outpouring of support helping the foundation's efforts to fight osteosarcoma. Photo by Victor Scott.

## A festival that fights back

### Teenager's spirit inspires loved ones to support osteosarcoma research and patient financial needs

By Victor Scott

Varsity softball player, class officer, senior prom committee chair — Jennifer Haynie was an inspiration to her classmates at Pearland High School and to everyone she knew. Her future was bright in 2007 as she prepared for graduation and the fall semester at Texas A&M University. But a diagnosis of osteosarcoma, a form of bone cancer, changed Jennifer's life in an instant.

As an athlete, Jennifer learned to ignore the occasional aches and pains associated with competition. But in December 2006, she noticed the pain in one of her legs wasn't going away. In fact, it became more intense.

"Sometimes the symptoms aren't very strong," says Mary Haynie, Jennifer's mother. "You don't think it's anything serious."

Doctors at MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital determined the cancer had spread to Jennifer's lungs. Over the next year she underwent radiation therapy, two lung surgeries and monthly chemotherapy.

In April 2008, Jennifer and her family faced the devastating news that the cancer had continued to spread. Jennifer succumbed to the disease the following month.

Mary's sisters, a source of inspiration and support, encouraged her to continue the fight against osteosarcoma. To honor her daughter's spirit, Mary decided to create the Haynie Spirit Bone Cancer Foundation.

"We had such an outpouring of support from friends and family that we thought we needed to turn that into something practical that we could use," she says.

In May 2010, the foundation held its first fundraising event, the Haynie Spirit Festival and BBQ Fundraiser. Buoyed by an overwhelming turnout, they planned another fundraiser, the December 2010 Haynie Spirit Bone Cancer Foundation Galveston SeaWalk.

Later that month, the Haynie Spirit Bone Cancer Foundation presented Jennifer's physician, Peter M. Anderson, M.D., professor in the Department of Pediatrics, with a \$10,000 check. The unrestricted funds will support Anderson's research and help meet the financial needs of osteosarcoma patients and their families.

"It's people like Jennifer who inspire us," says Anderson. "Her spirit is still with us in many, many ways."

The second annual Haynie Spirit Festival and BBQ Fundraiser, held in May, raised more than \$8,000 to support the fight against osteosarcoma.

"We're going to continue to honor Jennifer and at the same time raise money to fight this horrible disease," says Mary.





Sisters Annaliese Fowler, from left, Olivia Fowler and Samantha Fowler, who enjoy a family ski trip every year, are proud that their gift to the Santa's Elves wish list made it possible for another child to have fun on the annual MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital ski trip. Photo courtesy of Barb Fowler

## Philanthropy 101

# Young Donors Make Wishes Come True

By Victor Scott

Financial reports aren't typically part of Christmas Day festivities, especially for children. But for Joe and Linda Fowler's grandchildren, they're a highly anticipated holiday tradition.

It all started several years ago at the Houston couple's urging.

"We have nine grandchildren, and one of our goals is to stay involved in their lives and have a positive influence on them," says Joe. "We teach them that there's more self-satisfaction in giving than receiving and that life is about more than just yourself."

Each year right after Thanksgiving, Joe and Linda give money to each grandchild with instructions to donate to a worthy organization of their choice before Christmas. On Christmas Day the grandchildren deliver financial reports to the entire family detailing where and why they donated their money.

Three of their grandchildren — sisters Annaliese, 10, Olivia, 8, and Samantha, 6 — decided to combine their money and grant a

**"We have nine grandchildren, and one of our goals is to stay involved in their lives and have a positive influence on them. We teach them that there's more self-satisfaction in giving than receiving and that life is about more than just yourself."**

— Joe Fowler

wish for one pediatric patient to attend the annual MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital ski trip.

"We go on a family ski trip every year, and the girls really love it," says Barb Fowler, proud mother. "They wanted to help another child have as much fun as they do."

The girls learned about the wish through the annual MD Anderson fundraiser known as the Santa's Elves Party. Members of the institution's Advance Team advisory board started the event in Houston in 2006 to support the Children's Cancer Hospital. Santa's Elves expanded to Beaumont in 2009.

Prior to each party, pediatric patients create

a wish list for Santa that's displayed on a giving tree. Lenae Fowler, an MD Anderson assistant director of development who works closely with the Advance Team, shared the list with her family. The girls wasted no time in deciding to become Santa's Elves and grant one of those wishes.

"I try to teach my little sisters that it's important to be kind to others and to put yourself in their shoes," says Annaliese. "If you had cancer, wouldn't you want people to donate?"

The Santa's Elves Party offered just that opportunity.

"It was a chance to do something nice for a child who has cancer," says Olivia. "And now I feel like that patient is my friend."

Grandfather Fowler shares the pride he felt when the girls delivered the news that they were supporting MD Anderson.

"The combination of the latest research in the cancer field with great patient care makes MD Anderson a treasure in our community," says Joe. "I pray that my family and I will never need MD Anderson's services, but it's a comfort to know it's there."

# PROMISE

FALL 2011

A publication for friends of  
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

October

**15**

**Bastrop:**  
Cattlemen for Cancer  
Research Cattle Auction

October

**18**

**Richardson:** Marit Liv  
Peterson Melanoma  
Research Golf Fundraiser  
and Silent Auction



October

**20**

**Houston:** MD Anderson  
Cancer Center Board of  
Visitors Annual Meeting

## PERSPECTIVES

Comments? Suggestions?  
We welcome your perspective.  
Email us your thoughts:  
[Promise@mdanderson.org](mailto:Promise@mdanderson.org).

October

**30**

**Houston:** Halloween  
Costume Spooktacular  
at the Little Galleria

November

**1**

**Houston:**  
A Conversation  
With a Living Legend®  
Katie Couric



November

**4**

**Las Vegas:**  
A Conversation  
With a Living Legend®  
Franco Harris

November

**20**

**Kingwood:**  
Golfers Against  
Cancer Celebrity  
Pro Am

November

**20**

**San Antonio:**  
A Conversation  
With a Living Legend®  
Cokie Roberts  
and Sam Donaldson



## ACCESS ANSWERS

To become a patient:  
Call 877-632-6789  
or fill out the self-referral  
form at [mdanderson.org](http://mdanderson.org).

December

**8**

**Beaumont  
and Houston:**  
Santa's Elves  
Holiday Party

December

**10**

**Houston:** Breakfast  
With Santa at the  
Little Galleria

January

**4**

**Dallas:**  
A Conversation  
With a Living Legend®  
Sir Richard Branson