

# PROMISE

SUMMER 2011

A publication for friends of MD Anderson

DePinho to be  
MD Anderson's  
next president

Personalized  
cancer therapy:  
The right drug  
at the right time

\$5 million gift  
supports need for  
melanoma research

Local bakery,  
Arts in Medicine  
strike a sweet deal:

Cupcakes  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS  
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Making Cancer History®

# Capitalizing on our differences

**New Sheikh Khalifa Institute at MD Anderson  
poised to lead toward personalized cancer therapy**

By Dawn Dorsey

**E**ach person is unique; each tumor is unique. This seemingly simple truth is the premise of personalized cancer therapy, based on analyzing these differences to find keys that will unlock the mysteries of cancer.

At MD Anderson, the Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Institute for Personalized Cancer Therapy, named in recognition of a transformational gift from the Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation, is perfectly poised to lead the way in this growing field. Personalized cancer therapy has the potential to revolutionize cancer care and prevention. By targeting specific genetic and molecular abnormalities in each tumor and each patient's body, scientists are learning to match patient and tumor with the most effective treatments.

## Listen and learn

"In personalized cancer therapy, we listen to what the patient's body and the tumor are trying to tell us," says Gordon Mills, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Khalifa Institute for Personalized Cancer Therapy. "If we just pay attention, patients can teach us incredible things."

"For instance, in many clinical trials

a subset of patients shows remarkable responses. These patients are trying to tell us something if we will just listen. Their tumor or genetic makeup is saying, 'This is the right drug for me.' If we can identify more patients who 'look' just like these, then we can have another major leap forward."

It's not that researchers didn't want to listen in the past, Mills says. They just didn't have the tools.

"We now have incredible technologies that can analyze at diagnosis what's going on in each tumor and find out at an early stage how that tumor is responding to therapy," he says. "Putting these together, we're getting better and better at pairing patients with the right treatments."

## On a mission

With new leadership, including Mills and John Mendelsohn, M.D., who steps in as co-director as of Sept. 1, the Khalifa Institute is laying the groundwork to make quantum leaps in personalized cancer therapy. And they're armed with a new mission statement that leaves no room for ambivalence.

The goal of the Khalifa Institute is for MD Anderson investigators to define the new standard of patient care — making personalized cancer therapy available to

all new patients by the end of five years, with full third-party reimbursement based on evidence from clinical trials. This research will revolutionize the way we manage cancer patients.

“Today this approach and most of the targeted treatments are considered experimental,” Mendelsohn says. “Our goal is to perform research proving efficacy, so this will become standard of practice, reimbursed by private and governmental payors. Our ultimate goal is to cure more patients with cancer.”

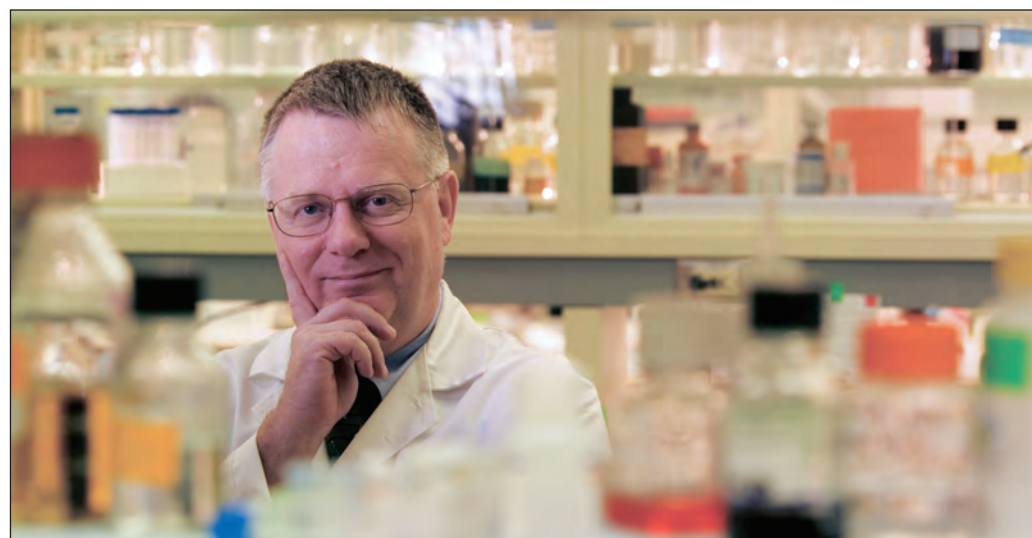
MD Anderson’s bold approach shows its deep commitment to personalized cancer therapy. Ambitious plans include completing by 2014 the Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan Building for Personalized Cancer Care, a 600,000-square-foot state-of-the-art



facility made possible by the above-mentioned generous gift from the Khalifa Foundation. A visionary pilot project dubbed T9 and led by Mills is one of the first orders of business.

### Multiplying the possibilities

T9, short for Ten Thousand Tumors, Ten Thousand Tests, Ten Thousand Therapies, aims to bring the promise of personalized therapy to reality. During the next two years, researchers will analyze the cancer-causing genetic variations in the tumors of 10,000 patients with advanced cancers that have no standard therapy. Doctors will refer their patients to clinical trials of experimental drugs and other anti-cancer agents that target those specific genetic aberrations.



Personalized cancer therapy means delivering “the right dose of the right drug for the right indications to the right patient at the right time,” says Gordon Mills, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Khalifa Institute. *Photo by John Smallwood*

“T9 will bring together all the molecular knowledge we’ve gained during the past 20 years,” Mills says. “We’ll also gain new knowledge and pair it with advanced technology to deliver the right dose of the right drug for the right indications to the right patient at the right time.”

### A ‘perfect storm’

A number of factors come together at MD Anderson to distinguish the institution as a driving force in personalized cancer therapy.

“Among centers providing care for cancer patients, MD Anderson is in the best position to lead in developing personalized cancer therapy,” Mendelsohn says. “We have the largest number of patients, the most experience in investigating experimental treatments and an outstanding faculty committed to this research. And we already have a track record of innovative clinical trials with experimental drugs targeting genetic aberrations in patients’ cancers.”

In fact, MD Anderson scientists have identified critical genetic aberrations across several tumor types, including melanoma and cancers of the breast, lung, bowel, pancreas, brain, ovary and endometrium, that account for the vast majority of deaths from cancer. And the Khalifa Institute has been involved in recent major studies with the potential to change the treatment of some types of melanoma and breast cancer.

“MD Anderson brings together all the elements to make progress in this exciting field,” Mills says. “We see 30,000 new patients a year, many of whom are interested in participating in research studies. We have an extraordinary faculty dedicated to this approach, and the institution rewards them for doing high-level, innovative research.”

MD Anderson has built a massive and effective infrastructure to begin to do this type of research, says Mills.

“There’s a perfect storm at MD Anderson that gives us the best opportunity to move personalized cancer therapy forward,” he says. “The Khalifa Institute’s work will help make personalized cancer therapy the routine way to help patients, not an exception.”

## A message from John Mendelsohn, M.D.



For 15 years, I have had the best job imaginable. This has been the happiest and most productive period of my life. I am grateful for the opportunity I have had to lead the MD Anderson team: from the brilliant and talented faculty, administrators and employees, to the dedicated volunteers and generous supporters throughout Houston, the nation and the world.

Despite the tough economic times that have marked the recent past, private philanthropy to MD Anderson has increased almost tenfold since I arrived in 1996. Your incredible show of support has enabled us to forge ahead toward the dream of personalized care for each cancer patient. Together we have advanced the institution’s mission to eradicate cancer.

We have accomplished much, but much more remains to be done. Soon I will pass the leadership of this great institution to its fourth president, Dr. Ronald DePinho. I am confident that under his expert guidance MD Anderson will continue to redefine the standard of care for cancer patients and survivors.

I am reminded of the words of the late architect Daniel Burnham, often quoted by MD Anderson’s legendary Dr. R. Lee Clark. Burnham said, “Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood ... Make big plans; aim high in hope and work.” Thank you for joining us in making big plans happen — for joining us in Making Cancer History®.

## PROMISE

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**ON THE COVER:** Leen Aldarrab joins fellow patients at MD Anderson Children’s Cancer Hospital for a party launching a unique partnership with Crave Cupcakes and the Arts in Medicine program. *Photo by Ian Cion*  
This publication was not printed at state expense.



Michael J. Ahearn, Ph.D., has been instrumental in securing MD Anderson's status as a degree-granting institution during his tenure as dean of the School of Health Professions. *Photo by F. Carter Smith*

## Dean makes president's list

In June, Michael J. Ahearn, Ph.D., accepted the prestigious Presidents' Award from John Mendelsohn, M.D.

Founding dean of MD Anderson's School of Health Professions, Ahearn is retiring after a distinguished 46-year career at MD Anderson dedicated to improving the quality of science education. Thanks in large part to his efforts, the institution gained degree-granting status in 2000. Today, the School of Health Professions offers eight programs that lead to bachelor's degrees. Other career highlights include creating and directing The Carl B. and Florence E. King Foundation Annual High School Summer Program in Biomedical Sciences. It offers graduating high school students an opportunity to conduct research under the guidance of MD Anderson faculty. Ahearn also initiated a summer training opportunity for secondary science teachers.

Ahearn developed the science-based skin cancer awareness and prevention curriculum Project S.A.F.E.T.Y. (Sun Awareness for Educating Today's Youth), now in use in many schools in Texas and beyond (see Advance Team story on page 5).

The Presidents' Award is the latest of several honors Ahearn has received during his career, including the Julie and Ben Rogers Award for Excellence in the area of education in 2000. He was inducted into the Texas Science Hall of Fame in 2002 and into The University of Texas Academy of Health Science Education in 2006.



Ronald DePinho, M.D., enjoying a summer outing with his wife, Lynda Chin, M.D., and their three children, from left, Alexis, 10, Joseph, 7, and Carolyn, 8, says his family is excited about building a new life together in Houston. *Photo courtesy of Ronald DePinho, M.D.*

## DePinho named fourth president in history of MD Anderson

The University of Texas System Board of Regents has chosen Ronald DePinho, M.D., as the next president of MD Anderson. He will be known as president-designate until his new duties as MD Anderson's president start Sept. 1.

DePinho will succeed John Mendelsohn, M.D., who announced in December his plans to step down after 15 years as the institution's third full-time president.

A genetics researcher and professor at Harvard Medical School, DePinho is director of Boston's Belfer Institute for Applied Cancer Science at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. DePinho, a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies and fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, previously held numerous faculty positions at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. He received a bachelor's degree in biological sciences from Fordham College and his medical degree with distinction in microbiology and immunology from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. DePinho's research interests are in the genetic aspects of cancer and the translation of such knowledge into clinical endpoints.

DePinho's wife, Lynda Chin, M.D., also will join the MD Anderson faculty. Chin, whose research interests are in cancer genomics and cancer biology, is the scientific director of the



Ronald DePinho, M.D., takes the reins as president of MD Anderson Sept. 1 with the beginning of Fiscal Year 2012. *Photo by F. Carter Smith*

Belfer Institute for Applied Cancer Science at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. She also is professor of dermatology at Harvard Medical School and the department of medical oncology at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. *Hear DePinho on his experience and his new role: Video at <http://bit.ly/mx5eOu>.*

# Mulvas give \$5 million to melanoma research

By Michelle Moore

**J**im Mulva is the CEO of ConocoPhillips. His wife, Miriam, is his support system and a powerful force in her own right. What's most impressive, however, are the gracious demeanors and philanthropic hearts that guide their professional and personal lives.

Their recent \$5 million contribution to the Miriam and Jim Mulva Fund for Melanoma Research, for example, reflects their goal to help a team of doctors at MD Anderson make advances in melanoma in a way that provides tangible success and helps patients. The gift will support the research of Patrick Hwu, M.D., chair of the Department of Melanoma Medical Oncology; Elizabeth Grimm, Ph.D., professor, departments of Experimental Therapeutics and Melanoma Medical Oncology; and Jeff E. Lee, M.D., chair of the Department of Surgical Oncology and co-director of the Melanoma and Skin Cancer Research Program.

"They're working hard to map tumors through individualized therapy, to eradicate the tumors and save lives," says Miriam. "We're proud and pleased to be a part of that. We met the doctors, and they're so committed to and excited about what they're doing. It was contagious."

ConocoPhillips has been involved with MD Anderson for many years, says Jim.

"We refer our employees and retirees from all around the world there because it's the premier cancer institution in the world. I'm

proud to be affiliated with, help and know MD Anderson."

The Mulvas' relationship with MD Anderson took on a more personal note four years ago, when their youngest son Jonathan was diagnosed with melanoma just three weeks before his wedding.

Jonathan's diagnosis came as a complete surprise, says his mother.

"He had an annual physical exam including a visit to the dermatologist," says Miriam. "He went to MD Anderson after finding a malignant mole on his forehead. They did such an incredible job, and we were so pleased with everyone from the administration to the doctors and surgeons."

Jim Mulva has been on The University Cancer Foundation Board of Visitors since 2003 and has enjoyed seeing the fruits of his labor firsthand.

"It's just a natural fit for us to want to support MD Anderson," he says. "It's such an incredible institution, and while it's very large, it's still very personal. Everyone there is committed to what they're doing. It's inspiring to see."

Giving back is one of the Mulvas' top priorities. Both Jim and Miriam are involved in numerous charitable efforts supporting education, youths and medicine.

"We've been blessed," says Jim. "What we have is not necessarily ours, and it's important what we do with it. The kind of commitment, clinical work and research going on at MD Anderson to extend and save lives takes

financial resources. The more we all do this together in a national way, the more we'll help MD Anderson with its mission of Making Cancer History®."

Video: [MakingCancerHistoryCampaign.com](http://MakingCancerHistoryCampaign.com)

Jim and Miriam Mulva have made melanoma research a philanthropic priority since their son's experience at MD Anderson four years ago. Photo by John Everett



## Patients, peers laud award winner

**H**er colleagues describe her as a "rising star," a "natural leader," a "fearless" advocate for patients. What patients value most is simply her warmth and compassion.

Nancy Tomczak, a clinical nurse in the inpatient stem cell transplant unit at MD Anderson, is the recipient of the 2011 Ethel Fleming Arceneaux Outstanding Nurse-Oncologist Award. Tomczak accepted her award at an MD Anderson ceremony June 22. The award, the institution's highest nursing honor, is funded and presented annually by The Brown Foundation, Inc.

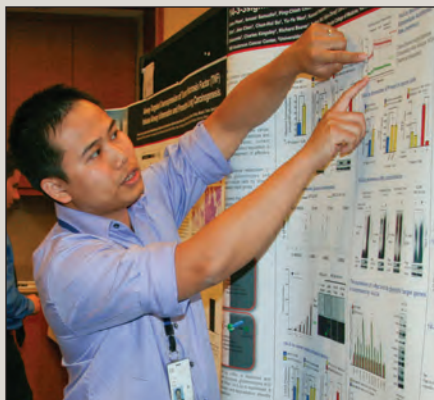
Straight out of nursing school at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Tomczak landed a job at MD Anderson, where she's spent her entire 10-year career. She's proved herself not only as a nurse, but also as a leader. Her dedication and drive for helping others develop their nursing skills led to her nomination as a candidate for MD Anderson's 2008 Excellence in Nursing Leadership Award. She is a member of the Oncology Nursing Society and serves as chair of the Nursing Practice Congress.



Nancy Tomczak received a cash award of \$15,000, a crystal plaque and a commemorative pin as recipient of the 2011 Ethel Fleming Arceneaux Outstanding Nurse-Oncologist Award, made possible by The Brown Foundation, Inc. Photo by Barry Smith

"When deciding where to start my career, there was no question — only the best," Tomczak says. "Little did I know that nursing at MD Anderson would be such a rewarding, well-rounded profession."

Video: [MakingCancerHistoryCampaign.com](http://MakingCancerHistoryCampaign.com)



## Benchmark event

Liem Phan, graduate research assistant, explains one of 76 research posters on display in conjunction with MD Anderson's Division of Internal Medicine Research Retreat in May. John Mendelsohn, M.D., president of MD Anderson, gave the Mavis P. Kelsey Lecture, established in 2009 by the Kelsey Research Foundation. The lecture series' namesake, Mavis P. Kelsey, M.D., co-founder of Kelsey-Seybold Clinic, began working part-time at MD Anderson in 1949, specializing in thyroid disease. During his 20 years at the institution, he developed a clinical isotope program, established an endocrine clinic and worked on constructing a Geiger counter to determine thyroid uptake of radioiodine. Kelsey was the first Houston physician to hold a license from the Atomic Energy Commission to administer radioisotopes to humans.

## DONORS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

### BOV member repays debt of gratitude to MD Anderson

By Michelle Moore

**P**hyllis Hojel of Mexico City has made it her mission to spread the word about MD Anderson and contribute to the institution however she can.

“There are two generations of cancer in my family: my mother’s and mine,” says Hojel, who was treated at MD Anderson for thyroid cancer years ago. “I’ve had many friends who suffer from the disease, and it’s been gratifying to refer them to MD Anderson.”

Recently through the Hojel-Schumacher Foundation, Hojel gave \$250,000 to the Institute for Basic Science, bringing her total giving to MD Anderson to \$400,000.

“We gave in recognition of Dr. John Mendelsohn’s outstanding work to provide adequate support for his research,” says Hojel. “Financial support is so important to discovering new ways to combat cancer.”

Hojel draws much of her inspiration from her late husband Richard, who at 32 was electrocuted in an accident and lost both his arms. Instead of withdrawing from the active life he previously enjoyed, he went on to become a successful business entrepreneur who devoted considerable time to counseling and encouraging other amputees.

The Tulsa, Okla.-based Hojel-Schumacher Foundation has a variety of interests. It has been involved in the cancer center of Mexico City’s American British Cowdray Medical Center. The foundation also provides scholarships for Mexican children who have suffered amputations and supports institutions that teach entrepreneurship to the less fortunate.

Hojel has been on The University Cancer Foundation Board of Visitors (BOV) since 2006.

“The staff’s professionalism and dedication to my needs at the time I was being treated made it easy to accept the invitation to join the BOV several years ago,” says Hojel.

Hojel finds time between her work with the BOV and other charitable endeavors to enjoy the simple things in life: golfing, hiking, reading, traveling, improving her bridge game and being with her 12 grandchildren.

“My life has been filled with good fortune — loving and supportive parents, a wonderful marriage and good friends in Mexico and the United States,” says Hojel. “Those advantages make it especially important to repay the debt of gratitude I owe to MD Anderson for my own successful treatment. Such a win-win opportunity to make a difference doesn’t come along very often.”



Farrah Fawcett and her newborn son pay a visit to Sylvia Dorsey upon the birth of her son. “We were so happy with our babies,” says Dorsey. “Farrah was a generous friend in life, and her generosity continues.” Photo courtesy of Sylvia Dorsey

### A promise fulfilled

#### Foundation honors Farrah Fawcett’s memory

By Katrina Burton

**T**elevision icon Farrah Fawcett left more than a legacy of fans and supporters. She also left a legacy of hope for cancer patients. Two years after her death from anal cancer, the Farrah Fawcett Foundation has awarded MD Anderson \$170,000 to support cancer research and assist cancer patients.

In keeping with the Beverly Hills, Calif.-based foundation’s mission to help cancer patients during treatment, it allocated \$20,000 to establish the Farrah Fawcett Foundation Patient Assistance Fund. The fund covers expenses including parking, meals and lodging for MD Anderson patients to help improve their quality of life.

“I was inspired by a courageous young patient at MD Anderson who lost his battle with cancer,” says actress Alana Stewart, founding board member and president of the Farrah Fawcett Foundation.

Fawcett’s roots to Texas, coupled with appreciation for the care her deceased sister Diane Walls received at MD Anderson, contributed to the foundation’s decision to support research in four key areas.

**\$50,000:** to support Cathy Eng, M.D., a gastrointestinal medical oncologist at MD Anderson, and a multidisciplinary group of physicians in analyzing tumor and blood specimens in patients with local and advanced-stage squamous cell carcinoma of the anal canal. They hope to identify risk factors and abnormalities that may account for the development of this rare malignancy.

**\$50,000:** to support a research project of Valerae O. Lewis, M.D., of the Department of Orthopaedic Oncology, Division of Surgery, who is investigating the role of the



Alana Stewart, from left, Sylvia Dorsey and Greg Walls, son of Farrah Fawcett’s sister Diane Fawcett Walls, visit a room bearing a plaque recognizing the foundation’s generosity in “loving memory of Farrah Fawcett.” Photo by Barry Smith

interleukin-11 receptor in bone tumors and its potential as a target for treatment. Lewis aims to develop a less toxic alternative for osteosarcoma patients, who currently face life-threatening side effects.

**\$25,000:** a stipend for Dean Lee, MD., Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics. Lee’s research focuses on improving natural killer (NK) cell immunotherapy. His lab has developed a method to increase the number of NK cells from a small amount of donor blood to help detect and fight hard-to-treat cancers.

**\$25,000:** to Joya Chandra, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Pediatrics, to support ON (Optimizing Nutrition) to Life, a multidisciplinary program at MD Anderson Children’s Cancer Hospital aimed at nutritional challenges pediatric cancer patients typically face when undergoing treatment, including a high risk for obesity. The program includes an online resource promoting healthful eating habits among patients and survivors.

While the foundation’s interests encompass patient care and research support, they also include prevention.

“We’re interested in the research and tools available to help prevent the disease,” explains Stewart.

Video: [MakingCancerHistoryCampaign.com](http://MakingCancerHistoryCampaign.com)

# Faith is at foundation's core

## Family dreams of finding a cure

By Gail Goodwin

**B**y all accounts, Addison Faith Bender was the perfect playmate for two older brothers. But on what was supposed to be a fun-filled family vacation to Mexico, her parents, Amber and Tony Bender of Kingwood, began to notice that 15-month-old Addi's head was dramatically "tilted."

Back home, an MRI showed that the Benders' baby had two brain tumors. After surgery, the pathology report revealed atypical teratoma with rhabdoid features, or AT/RT. This type of malignancy, almost always fatal in young children, called for very aggressive treatment.

Chemotherapy, multiple surgeries and radiation treatment over the next six months were struggles for the Bender family. But Addi's mother reports that her child never complained and always had a smile for everyone.

The idea to establish a foundation began while Addi was still in the hospital.

"Regardless of the outcome of the treatment, we knew we wanted to do something to better the situation for the patients and for research options. When you have a child with cancer, that's pretty much your life, and we wanted to help other families," says Amber.

Addi did not survive

Amber and Tony Bender enjoy an Astros game with their daughter Addison and sons Riley and Trent.  
Photo courtesy of Amber Bender



her cancer, but she lives on through research on her tumor cells, called AB001. Vidya Gopalakrishnan, Ph.D., assistant professor in pediatric research, is working to take a new drug therapy to a Phase I clinical trial.

Through fundraising activities such as theater and scrapbooking events and an annual 5K Walk by Faith race, Addi's Faith Foundation anticipates raising \$200,000. Giving the entire amount to MD Anderson was a fairly easy decision for the foundation board, reports Tony.

"We knew we had something special when we were introduced to the new data presented by Dr. Gopalakrishnan," he says. "It's a novel approach to research when the project includes your daughter's tumor, your daughter's family foundation and all of those who've supported us over the past three years. All the puzzle pieces just fit. We have faith in our friends and in our foundation, and this is about as close as you can get to making your dream to find a cure come true."

Visit [addisfaithfoundation.org](http://addisfaithfoundation.org).

Video: [MakingCancerHistoryCampaign.com](http://MakingCancerHistoryCampaign.com)



Jenny Marie Johnson was a University of Texas alumna and licensed master social worker pursuing her doctorate when she became ill. Photo courtesy of Barbara Johnson

## Planned gift provides hope for others

By Michelle Moore

**I**n 2003, Barbara and Darrel Johnson received the worst news any parent could ever hear. Their 28-year-old daughter, Jenny Marie Johnson, was diagnosed with stage 3 sarcomatoid renal cell carcinoma, a rare, aggressive form of kidney cancer.

Barbara, a retired teacher; Darrel, an ordained Lutheran minister; and their son Clint, then a Rice University football player, were devastated.

"As her life drew to an end, we knew we wanted to establish a fund that would be used specifically for research on Jenny's particular type of cancer," says her mother.

When planning their will, the Johnsons created a trust to establish the Jenny Marie Johnson Memorial Fund for Kidney Cancer Research at MD Anderson.

"Jenny loved her family and friends, and they were with her to the very end of her life — some even had an impromptu slumber party in her room in palliative care," says Barbara, who has saved dozens of emails praising Jenny's courage and character.

The Johnsons drew strength from family, friends and faith. They even befriended a family from Turkey whose daughter also was going through treatment. At the end of it all, their motivation for giving was simple.

"We continue to pray and have hope that Jenny's death will in some way give others life, says Barbara."

Planned giving video: [mdandersonlegacy.org](http://mdandersonlegacy.org)

## Survivors Say

Susan Nutt is a senior associate director of philanthropic resources in MD Anderson's Development Office.

“I was 38 when I was diagnosed with a borderline tumor of low malignant potential. Lucky for me, I was told, if I was going to have an ovarian tumor this one was ‘the one to have.’ Unlike many ovarian cancer patients, I did not have to endure chemotherapy or radiation. I had always wanted to be a surgical nurse, but that’s not

the path that I found. Instead, I raise money for cancer research at MD Anderson and have for more than eight years. When I say I’m a survivor and I work for MD Anderson, I couldn’t be more proud. Although my journey wasn’t as difficult (thus far) as many have experienced, I do understand the importance of living every day to the fullest, because you never know what life holds for you.”

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



## Antibody-guided drug works against ALL

An antibody packaged with a potent chemotherapy drug to selectively destroy acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) cells eradicated or greatly reduced the disease for 61% of 46 patients in a Phase II study led by MD Anderson investigators and funded by a grant from Pfizer. Patients enrolled in the trial had ALL that resisted other therapies or recurred after treatment.

Findings were presented at the 47<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology in Chicago June 3-7.

“A response rate of more than 50% in this patient population probably makes inotuzumab ozogamicin the most active single-agent therapy ever for ALL,” says Hagop Kantarjian, M.D., professor and chair of MD Anderson's Department of Leukemia and study senior investigator.

ALL is an aggressive form of leukemia in which immature white blood cells, called lymphoblasts, grow rapidly, crowding out normal blood cells.



Yoga's mind-body interventions have a positive impact on the health of cancer patients, according to research findings presented at the 2011 meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology. *Photo by Karen Hensley*

## Yoga study shows benefits to cancer patients

Mind-body interventions are beneficial to the health of cancer patients, so found an MD Anderson study, in collaboration with India's largest yoga research institution, Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana in Bangalore.

Women with breast cancer undergoing radiation therapy who participated in yoga experienced improved physical functioning, better general health and lower stress hormone levels, and were better able to find meaning in their cancer experience.

“The combination of mind and body practices that are part of yoga have tremendous potential to help patients manage the psychosocial and physical distress associated with treatment and life after cancer, beyond the benefits of simple stretching,” says Lorenzo Cohen, Ph.D., professor and director of MD Anderson's Integrative Medicine Program.



Updating your barbecue techniques with four simple grilling tips can go a long way in preventing cancer, says Sally Scroggs, health education manager at MD Anderson's Cancer Prevention Center. *Photos © Istockphoto.com*

## Tips for healthful grilling

By *Laura Nathan-Garner*

A recent report supporting the link between red and processed meats and increased colorectal cancer risk may have many backyard chefs rethinking plans to throw hot dogs and steaks on the grill. But MD Anderson experts say small considerations — from what goes on that grill to how it's prepared — can keep cancer off the menu.

“The good news is that you can do something to reduce your risk of colorectal cancer,” says Sally Scroggs, health education manager at MD Anderson's Cancer Prevention Center. “Making just a few cooking adjustments when grilling can play a part in prevention.”

Scroggs recommends four barbecue tips to help ensure the thrill of the grill for many summers to come.

**1. Avoid processed meats.** Cancer-causing substances form when processed meats such as bacon, ham, pastrami, salami, sausage, hot dogs and pepperoni are preserved, says the American Institute for Cancer Research. Eating these meats can damage DNA, increasing the risk of colorectal cancer.

**2. Limit red meat.** Eating too much red meat such as pork, lamb and beef can raise cancer risk. Try grilling skinless chicken

breasts, fish, fruits and vegetables.

**3. Trim the fat.** Cancer-causing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) form in the smoke when fat from meat, poultry or fish drips onto the heat source. That PAH-filled smoke then coats your food.

**4. Don't char or burn meat, poultry or fish.** Charring, burning or grilling meat, poultry and fish over high temperatures causes heterocyclic amines (HCAs) to form. HCAs can damage genes, raising the risk for stomach and colorectal cancers.

To avoid HCAs:

**Use a marinade.** Marinating meat in vinegar, lemon juice and/or herbs can reduce HCA formation by as much as 96%.

**Stick with fish.** Fish contains less fat and cooks faster than meat and poultry.

**Lightly oil the grill.** This keeps charred materials from sticking to your food.

**Pre-cook food.** Less grill time means less exposure to cancer-causing chemicals.

**Lower the temperature.** Spread coals thinly or prop the grill rack on bricks. Barbecue briquettes and hardwood products (hickory, maple) burn at lower temperatures than softwood (pine) chips.

**Scrub the grill.** Cleaning after each use prevents harmful chemicals from building up and transferring to food.

For more information, see the *Focused on Health* newsletter at [mdanderson.org/focused](http://mdanderson.org/focused).



## AMONG FRIENDS

# Finding hope in everyday heroes

**With oncology team ahead of the game, mantle cell lymphoma survivor enjoys active life**

By Michelle Moore

When Marvin Kimmel was a kid, his heroes were baseball greats such as Jackie Robinson and Ted Williams. Now, at 84, he's a cancer patient, veteran, husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, and his definition of hero has changed significantly. Kimmel says he still admires the guys with baseball mitts, but his real heroes are the ones wearing white lab coats.

Kimmel, of Boca Raton, Fla., discovered 10 years ago that he had stage 4 mantle cell lymphoma (MCL).

"I went through a tough period, and the first thing I felt was anger," says Kimmel. "I think every cancer patient experiences that. I went to two distinguished cancer centers, and they both gave me a terminal diagnosis."

His son wouldn't accept it, though, and reached out to a friend who was head radiologist at a hospital nearby.

"He told my son that there is only one place to take your father, and that's MD Anderson," says Kimmel.

Kimmel made the trip to Houston and spent eight months at MD Anderson. He's been receiving treatment for the past decade from

Michael Wang, M.D., associate professor in the Department of Lymphoma/Myeloma, along with a group of doctors in Florida.

"My oncologist in Florida comes from MD Anderson. He was a fellow along with Dr. Wang. I have a team that is there for me, and Dr. Wang is the quarterback," says Kimmel. "You need to go where people can treat you. If you have cancer, MD Anderson is the place to be. Its doctors are ahead of the game. They have a list of options, and if one doesn't work, they are already prepared with the next. That's the difference between this place and others."

Still very active, Kimmel continues to participate in some of his favorite activities. He plays tennis five times a week, despite numbness in the bottoms of his feet due to chemotherapy-induced neuropathy, and he has an avid interest in airplanes. He manages to find time to make a difference in the lives of others; born in Brooklyn during the Depression, he learned the importance of giving back early on.

"I've learned that when you give, it comes right back to you," says Kimmel. "I just donated to lymphoma research and had no idea that the funds were in turn used specifically for MCL research. I'm still around because of MD Anderson and its research. Since my original diagnosis 10 years ago, I've had five great-grandchildren. I wouldn't have seen any of them if I hadn't come to MD Anderson."

Kimmel raves not only about MD Anderson but also about Wang.

"When I first came to MD Anderson, I was prepared for the worst, and I brought my accountant and my estate planners," says Kimmel, whose daughter-in-law also is a patient of Wang. "My relationship with MD Anderson is like a family. I speak to Dr. Wang maybe two or three times a week. He is such a hard worker and is so dedicated to cancer research. I get my passion from him."

Wang counters with a modest response.

"I'm only a part of this great institution," he says. "We're able to accomplish what we accomplish because of our colleagues, our team efforts, our nurses and not only our institution but also our collaborators throughout this country and even the world. Marvin is an excellent patient who's passionate. He has a great track record of supporting our research, some of which would not have happened without his critical help. He truly is the most generous of philanthropists."

Marvin Kimmel, left, says his diagnosis took him through an array of emotions, but at the end of the day he needed to know whether there was hope. He found it in his MD Anderson oncologist, Michael Wang, M.D. Photo by Barry Smith



Photo by Michael Hart

## iPromise

Anne Mendelsohn has long supported Houston's cultural and philanthropic communities, particularly those related to education, health care, the performing arts and the public understanding of science. She has chaired the board of the Houston Museum of Natural Science and the Houston regional board of Teach for America. Anne and her husband, John Mendelsohn, M.D., president of MD Anderson, have received a number of honors together, including the Woodrow Wilson Award for Public Service, the Houston Technology Center Celebration of Entrepreneurs Award and the Teach for America-Houston's annual award for advancing education.

“ Before we came to Houston in 1996, I'd never dreamt that one could love an institution. But when I walked into MD Anderson, it was love at first sight. Someone was playing a lilting piano melody, and a volunteer I'd never seen before rushed up to welcome us with an infectious smile and big hugs. Hope, love and dedication to the mission of defeating cancer were palpable everywhere. Doctors, nurses, staff, patients, volunteers — all dream the same dream and work relentlessly to make it come true.



A painting by an 11-year-old patient from Saudi Arabia captures my feelings perfectly. He painted a group of children with a flag that reads, 'We love life. We love the MD Anderson.' We do!

It's been an enormous privilege to work with our superb team at the No. 1 cancer center in the nation on Making Cancer History®.

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).



Connor Cruse's joyful spirit through 25 rounds of chemotherapy, 14 surgeries, two bone marrow transplants and countless procedures remains an inspiration to family and friends.

*Photo courtesy of the TeamConnor Foundation*

## TeamConnor plays to win against childhood cancer

By Michelle Moore

Connor Cruse was just 4 years old when he presented with neuroblastoma, a cancerous tumor that develops from the nerve cells and occurs in infants and children. Five years later, the disease claimed his life, but his courageous spirit lives on through the TeamConnor Cancer Foundation, established by Tait and Joy Cruse of Frisco, Texas, in honor of their son.

TeamConnor's mission is to raise awareness, support families, fund treatments and help find a cure for childhood cancer, says Jennifer Bolton, executive director of the TeamConnor Foundation. Through golf tournaments, auctions, and other fundraising events, the foundation has awarded close to \$1 million for research and family support.

MD Anderson became one of the most recent recipients of TeamConnor's generosity when it awarded \$50,000 to Joya Chandra, Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Pediatrics, to support her glioblastoma research.

"Dr. Chandra has enormous compassion for families suffering as a result of a child being diagnosed with cancer. Finding a cure for childhood cancer is paramount to Dr. Chandra, but she never forgets that families are in emotional pain as they maneuver through the complicated world of cancer protocols," says Bolton.

Recent cutbacks in federal research funds make philanthropic support critical, says Chandra.

"Without philanthropy this wouldn't be possible," says Chandra. "I'm grateful for foundations and families like TeamConnor. Instead of just asking the questions like 'Why me?' they decide to do something so wonderful for other families."



Jakaya Crawford, a patient at MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital, prepares to enjoy a piece of edible art as her sister looks on at the recent party celebrating Crave Cupcakes' partnership with Arts in Medicine. *Photo by Ian Cion*

## Taking a bite out of cancer

### Crave Cupcakes partners with MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital's Arts in Medicine

By Michelle Moore

Crave Cupcakes has added an important ingredient to its recipe for success — philanthropy. The popular Houston-area bakery is partnering with Arts in Medicine, a program that offers patients at MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital a creative outlet through integrative and group art projects.

Starting in September 2011, the bakery will package cupcakes delivered to the Texas Medical Center in boxes with specially designed stickers denoting that a portion of proceeds will go to the program.

"We're so excited to be working with Arts in Medicine," says Elizabeth Harrison, part-owner of Crave Cupcakes. "Earlier this year we had our first cupcake decorating and art party. Patients decorated their own Crave cupcakes, and they had the opportunity to participate in expressive painting. We took a number of the paintings and created mixer shapes to promote our partnership."

Ian Cion, MD Anderson's artist in residence, leads Arts in Medicine and hopes the program has a positive and lasting

impression for pediatric patients facing grueling challenges.

"I hope the experience translates to their sense of optimism," says Cion. "They can experience achieving something they didn't think they could, so it makes them feel that they can continue to fight. We use art to motivate patients and as a means of building relationships, a sense of belonging, a desire to exceed and to go beyond their fears and, ultimately, a will to live."

Harrison says Cion's enthusiasm was contagious during their first meeting last year.

"We realized we had the opportunity to be involved in something so much bigger than selling cupcakes," she says. "We had the opportunity to give back to and participate in an amazing cause."

One of Arts in Medicine's recent projects is the Tree of Life. Debuting at the John P. McGovern Museum of Health & Medical Science Sept. 10 for Childhood Cancer Survivors Day, it incorporates art that consists of burlap, beads, chicken wire and drawings.

"To me this tree is very personal," says Cion. "Every flower reminds me of the child who made it. I feel privileged that they let me into their lives and connect with me. The tree represents responding to life's challenges with beauty and joy."

To date Arts in Medicine is a completely philanthropic endeavor funded through grants, donations and partnerships, such as that with Crave Cupcakes.

"This year we logged 1,500 hours through more than 1,000 patient visits, and none of it would have happened without this kind of continued support," says Cion.

*Video: MakingCancerHistoryCampaign.com*



# Polo ponies up with fundraising and fun

## Polo on the Prairie marks 25 years

By Gail Goodwin

After 25 years, the Musselman family is still opening their hearts — and the gates to their ranch in Albany, Texas — to Polo on the Prairie, an annual celebration of MD Anderson, the research accomplished in its quest to conquer cancer and the thousands of patients the institution has treated during its 70 years.

What began as a passion for MD Anderson Board of Visitors member Mary Anne McCloud, the event is now a longstanding fundraiser for the institution, raising almost \$4 million for patient care, research, prevention and education initiatives. Co-chairs Melinda and Henry Musselman make it clear that Polo on the Prairie is a family commitment that means to give people hope when they need it. The \$315,000 raised at the 2011 Polo on the Prairie will help fund several key areas including the Anderson Network Hospitality Centers, Chaplaincy and Clinical Pastoral Education, Patient Advocacy and the Virginia Harris Cockrell Cancer Research Center, Science Park – Research Division.

In addition, a portion of proceeds will support the Anne and John Mendelsohn Personalized Cancer Therapy Fund, established to honor MD Anderson's third president and his wife.

Volunteers for the weekend were visible everywhere, from the registrars at the check-in table to the Boy Scouts in the

parking area to the polo players, who donated their time and horses. A little West Texas dust went home with the 1,300 in attendance, along with a kaleidoscope of impressions: horse hooves flying, friends gathering, delicious meals (loved that peach cobbler!), toe-tappin' to Pat Green and his band, putting a cowboy hat over your heart during *The Star Spangled Banner* and the memory of feeling so proud to be associated with MD Anderson.

Video: [MakingCancerHistoryCampaign.com](http://MakingCancerHistoryCampaign.com)



## Introducing: Polo Under the Palms

As a co-chair of the inaugural Polo Under the Palms March 12 at the Sarasota Polo Club in Lakewood Ranch, Fla., Jamie Uihlein followed through on a commitment he made years ago to support the institution's world-class research and patient care initiatives. In the process, he inspired 300 fellow Floridians to do the same, raising more than \$150,000.

The day's events included an action-packed polo match followed by a dinner of Old Florida cuisine and dancing to the Robert Williamson Band under a white tent decorated with, appropriately, dozens of palm trees. Joining Uihlein as co-chairs were his wife, Mary, and son and daughter-in-law James and Christie Uihlein.

That morning, MD Anderson held a free seminar, featuring John Mendelsohn, M.D., president of MD Anderson, and Randal Weber, M.D., chair of the Department of Head and Neck Surgery.

In 2004, Uihlein was diagnosed with stage 2 tongue cancer. Today he's cancer-free. He credits his positive outcome to the specialized care he received from Weber and team.

A portion of Polo Under the Palms proceeds is directed to the Uihlein Research Fund at MD Anderson.

— Sarah Watson

# Team effort makes major advances

## Volunteer leadership board celebrates 10th anniversary

By Victor Scott

Preparing for the future is no easy task. But that's one of many challenges for MD Anderson's Development Office. In 2001, that challenge was met head-on with the creation of the Advance Team, a volunteer leadership board.

"The early days of the Advance Team were full of excitement and energy, because the thrill of life is in creating things that weren't there before," says Roy Spence of Austin, who served as the Advance

Team's first chair from 2001 to 2003.

The Advance Team is helping define the next generation of MD Anderson supporters. During the past decade, the board has recruited some of the brightest young corporate executives, entrepreneurs and community leaders to advance two major initiatives. They began with a curriculum-based effort called Project S.A.F.E.T.Y. (Sun Awareness for Educating Today's Youth).

"I was so excited to be asked to be part of Project S.A.F.E.T.Y. It reaches out to science teachers and educates students about the importance of sun safety," says Kathryn Wilson, past chair, of Houston.

In 2005, the Advance Team took on a new challenge to generate awareness of MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital.

A New Year's gala at the Hilton Americas-Houston celebrated a new logo, a new name and new hope for young cancer patients.

Through special events such as Children's Cancer Hospital Night at Houston Astros games to Santa's Elves holiday celebrations in Houston and Beaumont to the launch of the Little Galleria Play Area and Family Lounge inside Houston's Galleria shopping mall, the Advance Team's success story continues.

At the March annual meeting, Advance Team members celebrated the board's 10th anniversary and took stock of the future. So what does the next decade look like? As Advance Team member Jeannie Frazier of Houston puts it: "The sky's the limit."

Video: [MakingCancerHistoryCampaign.com](http://MakingCancerHistoryCampaign.com)

# PROMISE

SUMMER 2011

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

September

**13**

**Houston:**  
Best Cellars  
Celebrity Dinner

September

**16**

**Houston:** Cancer  
Survivorship  
Conference

September

**17**

**Los Angeles:**  
Miles Against  
Melanoma



## PERSPECTIVES

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

September

**24**

**Houston:** AIM for  
a CURE Melanoma  
Walk and Fun Run

September

**29**

**Houston:** Julie and  
Ben Rogers Award for  
Excellence Presentation



October

**20**

**Houston:** The University  
Cancer Foundation  
Board of Visitors  
Annual Meeting

November

**1**

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



November

**4**

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

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or fill out the self-referral  
form at [mdanderson.org](http://mdanderson.org).

November

**20**

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



December

**31**

**Houston:**  
Ring in a Cure