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**MDAnderson
Cancer Center**

Making Cancer History®

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UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL

- 19: Austin, Texas**
Making Cancer History® Seminar
- 27: Houston, Texas**
Saks Fifth Avenue Grand Opening Gala
- 30: Albany, Texas**
Polo on the Prairie - 30th Anniversary

JUNE

- 8: Raleigh, North Carolina**
Making Cancer History® Seminar

JULY

- 22: Aspen, Colorado**
Making Cancer History® Seminar

SEPTEMBER

- 21: Atlanta, Georgia**
Making Cancer History® Seminar

NOVEMBER

- 10: Houston, Texas**
75th Anniversary Gala

ACCESS ANSWERS

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

Download Promise at www.mdanderson.org/Promise.

If you do not want to receive certain fundraising communications from MD Anderson, please visit our website at www.mdanderson.org/FundraisingOptOut or contact us at 855-344-5272.

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PHILANTHROPY RECOGNIZES RESEARCH, CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

Award recipients demonstrate innovation in Making Cancer History®

BY ALLISON SCHAFFER

Shirley Stein Scientific Endowed Research Award

EUGENE KOAY, M.D., Ph.D., AND JEANNELYN SANTIANO ESTRELLA, M.D., have received the 2016 Shirley Stein Scientific Endowed Research Award and \$10,000 cash prizes to further their respective research efforts at MD Anderson.



“Our results will help us make progress in pancreatic cancer by identifying patients who will respond to current treatments and emerging therapies. The research was possible because we had a great team of scientists and physicians working together,” says Koay.

“I sincerely thank the Stein family and Regina Rogers for their generosity and the committee for recognizing the important contributions of young faculty members in Pathology,” says Estrella. “It’s traditionally difficult for us in the Pathology department to receive philanthropic funding, as we’re generally behind the scenes in patient care.”

Koay is an assistant professor of Radiation Oncology. His research focuses on developing a new method of characterizing pancreatic ductal adenocarcinomas (PDAC) using routine CT scans. Estrella is an assistant professor of Pathology. Her research focuses on developing novel biomarkers which will identify patients with metastatic pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors, who are more likely to progress and need intense, focused treatment through clinical trials.

MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors members Regina Rogers and Gary Stein, along with the Stein family, created the Shirley Stein Scientific Endowed Research Award in 2015 to honor Regina’s lifelong friend and Gary’s mother, the late Shirley Stein, who held a special place in her heart for MD Anderson. “She felt strongly that although she never had to be cared for there, MD Anderson was one of Houston’s crown jewels and needed to be taken care of,” says Stein. “This is one way we can honor her memory.” The Stein endowment funds two cash awards each year to recognize exceptional clinical research from faculty members with limited project resources.

Jack and Beverly Randall Prize for Excellence in Cancer Treatment



EHAB HANNA, M.D., professor of Head and Neck Surgery, is the 2016 recipient of the Jack and Beverly Randall Prize for Excellence in Cancer Treatment. Internationally recognized for his expertise,

Hanna has spent the past 12 years at MD Anderson treating patients with skull base tumors and head and neck cancers. His clinical and translational research focuses on developing minimally invasive and robotic applications in skull base surgery.

“This award is particularly meaningful to me because it celebrates excellence in clinical care. I consider it the greatest privilege when patients entrust us with their care at one of their most vulnerable moments — facing the fight against cancer,” says Hanna.

Jack Randall, a member of the MD Anderson

Cancer Center Board of Visitors, and his wife, Beverly, established the Randall Prize last year to motivate MD Anderson faculty to continue pushing the boundaries in the fight against cancer. Through an endowment created by the Randall family, a \$100,000 cash prize will be awarded each year. The focus alternates between innovations in cancer research and excellence in patient care.

“It’s important to build on MD Anderson’s history of achievement by honoring, encouraging and advancing innovative research,” says Beverly. “This award is our way of supporting tomorrow’s leaders so they have the incentive and resources needed to make this happen.”

Hanna is medical director of the Head and Neck Center and co-director of the institution’s Skull Base Tumor program. He also is president of the North American Skull Base Society.

“I’d like to thank Jack and Beverly Randall for their generous gift and for having the foresight to rotate this award between research and clinical care. All of our groundbreaking discoveries in basic, translational and clinical research **ultimately focus on one goal: improving the lives of our patients.**” — Ehab Hanna, M.D.

Finneran Family Prize



GORDON MILLS, M.D., Ph.D., recently received the second annual Finneran Family Prize, a \$50,000 cash award given annually to MD Anderson faculty through the Finneran Family Endowment for Translational Research.

Mills was recognized for his revolutionary efforts as both a physician and biochemist and for his leadership across the institution. He is the founding chair of Systems Biology, the first department of its kind with a cancer focus, and co-director of the Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Institute for Personalized Cancer Therapy. Mills also serves as a leader of MD Anderson’s Breast and Ovarian Cancers Moon Shot.

Mills’ research includes mechanistic

studies determining the role of genomic and other aberrations in patient tumors; identifying and validating therapeutic targets; developing, validating and implementing molecular markers; and integrating data into predictive mathematical models. He has extensively studied the genomics and genetics of ovarian, breast and endometrial cancers, identifying and characterizing a number of potential oncogenes and tumor suppressor genes that are being explored as markers and targets for therapy.

The Finneran Family Prize was established in 2013 at the Making Cancer History® Gala in Palm Beach, Fla. Bill Finneran, a prostate cancer survivor and member of the MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors, says the award is intended to honor those who hold the key to ending cancer for good.

“It’s a great honor to be recognized for career achievement by my colleagues and peers with The Finneran Family Prize in Translational Research. **I’m thankful for the vision of the Finneran family and for the dedication of my research team**, who come together in this award, to support our efforts to transform outcomes for cancer patients everywhere.” — Gordon Mills, M.D., Ph.D.

Discoveries Developments

MD Anderson shares in \$13.4 million award to study low-grade DCIS treatment

MD Anderson researchers are joining Duke Cancer Center and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in a funding award of \$13.4 million in hopes of determining if women with the earliest form of breast cancer, ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), need invasive surgery. The study will research the quality of life and psychosocial outcomes of women with DCIS. It's designed to determine if every woman needs an operation for a condition that's non-fatal, assess patient outcomes and explore issues that arise from having DCIS and how women make their decisions for treatment.

Multi-center study reveals unique subtypes of most common malignant brain cancer

An international collaborative study led by researchers at MD Anderson, Columbia University Medical Center and the University of Sao Paulo's Ribeirao Preto Medical School has revealed detailed new information about diffuse glioma, the most common type of tumor found in adult brain cancer patients. The study, which included data from 1,122 samples of diffuse glioma from lower to higher grades, raises hopes for improved clinical outcomes. It also points to a more precise way of predicting which tumors are more likely to grow rapidly and prescribing treatments accordingly.

Potential therapeutic targets identified for multiple sclerosis

Treatment of multiple sclerosis (MS) and other inflammatory diseases may benefit from new findings revealed in a study that identified potential therapeutic targets for a devastating disease striking some 2.3 million people worldwide.

The study, led by researchers at MD Anderson, described a protein regulator, Trabid, as an important piece of the puzzle that leads to autoimmune inflammation of the central nervous systems in MS patients.

Targeted axillary dissection of lymph nodes after chemotherapy improves staging accuracy of node-positive breast cancer patients

A new procedure developed by MD Anderson surgeons improves the accuracy of axillary staging and pathologic evaluation in clinically node-positive breast cancer. It also reduces the need for a more invasive procedure with debilitating complications. The research has changed treatment guidelines at the institution for a select group of breast cancer patients with lymph node metastasis, who now will receive Targeted Axillary Dissection. The study's findings may help up to 40% of women diagnosed with axillary metastasis who undergo neoadjuvant chemotherapy to avoid more extensive and often debilitating surgery.

MD Anderson joins nation's cancer centers in endorsing HPV vaccination for cancer prevention

In response to low national vaccination rates for the human papillomavirus (HPV) — under 40% of girls and just under 21% of boys — MD Anderson has joined with the 68 other National Cancer Institute-designated cancer centers in calling for increased HPV vaccination for the prevention of cancer. These institutions collectively recognize insufficient vaccination as a public health threat and call upon the nation's health care providers, parents and young adults to take advantage of this opportunity to prevent many types of cancer. MD Anderson has made a commitment to ending HPV-related cancers with the recently unveiled HPV-related Cancers Moon Shot.



ADOLFO CHAVEZ III



Study reveals potential therapy targets for triple negative breast cancer

A multi-institutional international study led by MD Anderson scientists has revealed new information about how long non-coding RNAs (lncRNA) interact with HIF-1, a signaling pathway that's overexpressed in many cancers. HIF-1 has been shown to regulate breast cancer progression. The team's findings explored HIF-1's role in triple negative breast cancer, an aggressive and hard-to-treat form of the disease. The study analyzed data from The Cancer Genome Atlas, a research program that's looking at genomic changes in more than 20 types of cancer, with support from the National Cancer Institute and National Human Genome Research Institute within the National Institutes of Health.

MD Anderson, AbbVie connect to advance cancer immunotherapy

The immunotherapy platform at MD Anderson and the global biopharmaceutical company AbbVie will join forces to find new ways to unleash the immune system's potential to fight cancer. The three-year collaboration agreement provides a framework for MD Anderson and AbbVie to efficiently choose and carry out preclinical and clinical studies evaluating new ideas in the cutting-edge area of immuno-oncology.

MD Anderson applauds State of the Union call to cure cancer

MD Anderson is grateful Vice President Joe Biden has inspired the creation of a national cancer moon shot and President Barack Obama's commitment to support this collective fight to end cancer. MD Anderson created the cancer Moon Shots Program in fall 2012 to accelerate declines in cancer mortality across several major cancer types (see Moon Shot Momentum, page 6). Based on multidisciplinary teams and platforms focused on execution, these pioneering efforts reflect that knowledge available today can be converted into new preventive measures and lifesaving therapeutic advances for cancer patients around the world.



MD Anderson and Enumeral enter into collaborative research and development agreement

MD Anderson has entered into a collaborative research and development agreement with Enumeral Biomedical Holdings Inc. focused on discovering and developing novel monoclonal antibodies against specified targets in immuno-oncology. The agreement leverages Enumeral's antibody discovery and patient-centric immune profiling platform and MD Anderson's preclinical and development expertise and infrastructure. MD Anderson's Oncology Research for Biologics and Immunotherapy Translation (ORBIT), a translational research platform of MD Anderson's Moon Shots Program, will play a key role.

New findings may enhance PARP inhibitors therapy in breast cancer

Findings from an MD Anderson study reveal that PARP inhibitors, an emerging class of drugs being studied in cancer clinical trials, may be enhanced by combining them with inhibitors targeting an oncogene known as c-MET that's overexpressed in many cancers. Researchers believe the study results may hold promise for future treatment of breast cancer and possibly other cancers, saying these findings may predict tumor resistance to PARP inhibitors. They suggest that treatment with a combination of c-MET and PARP inhibitors may benefit patients whose tumors with high c-MET expression don't respond to PARP inhibition alone.



F. CARTER SMITH

About the

B-cell Lymphoma MOON SHOT

Lymphoma is the most common form of blood cancer in the developed world. The two main types are Hodgkin lymphoma and non-Hodgkin lymphoma. About 85% of non-Hodgkin lymphomas form from B cells (part of the immune system). There are no curative treatments for B-cell lymphomas, and they usually develop resistance to therapies, leading to relapse.

GOALS

- Double the current 30% cure rate within five years
- Develop new predictive tools
- Find new targets for therapy
- Attack with new immunotherapy drugs, targeted therapies and engineered T cells

ADVANCES

- **New targeted therapy:** A pivotal clinical trial led by the research team of Michael Wang, M.D., showed that ibrutinib, combined with rituximab, has a response rate of more than 90% in patients with relapsed or refractory mantle cell lymphoma, an aggressive B-cell lymphoma. The Federal Drug Administration recently approved the drug.
- **CAR T cells (genetically modified immune T cells):** Preclinical and human Phase I/II clinical trials have demonstrated the safety, feasibility and preliminary effectiveness of CAR T cells, produced using the patient's own T cells or those from a related donor, and then engineered to be selectively toxic to the malignancy. MD Anderson also has developed a system to produce "off-the-shelf" CAR T cells from a universal donor that could be given to all patients. Adding these cells to blood stem cell transplants could improve response and increase the rate of long-term remissions through the immune graft-vs-lymphoma effect.

MOON SHOTS PROGRAM

Results-oriented, patient-driven

MD Anderson's Moon Shots Program is an unprecedented, comprehensive assault to significantly reduce cancer deaths and transform cancer care. Moon shot teams pursue innovative projects prioritized for greatest patient impact, including groundbreaking clinical trials of new cancer immunotherapies, targeted therapies and combinations. Longer-term collaboration to heighten molecular understanding of cancers and therapies aims to further improve translational research and move scientific findings into the clinic. Many moon shots also include prevention and early detection projects. Specialized platforms provide infrastructure, systems and strategy.

The ultimate goal is to apply knowledge gained from this process to all cancers. Moon shot efforts will help support all other cancer research at MD Anderson, particularly with improved resources and infrastructure. Funding is from private philanthropy, institutional earnings, competitive research grants and commercialization of new discoveries.

12 areas of focus:

- Acute myeloid leukemia/myelodysplastic syndromes
- B-cell lymphoma
- Chronic lymphocytic leukemia
- Colorectal cancer
- Glioblastoma
- High-risk multiple myeloma
- Human papillomavirus-related cancers
- Melanoma
- Lung cancer
- Pancreatic cancer
- Prostate cancer
- Triple negative breast and high-grade serous ovarian cancers

As of Feb. 29, private philanthropic commitments to the program total more than \$348.3 million.

MY MOON SHOT

TED TOPOLSKI, 74, of Houston, is a survivor of four cancers: B-cell lymphoma, lung cancer, gastrointestinal cancer and skin cancer. Retired from technology sales at IBM and BMC Software, Topolski, at right with his wife, Sally, is the father of three and grandfather of six.

I want to thank MD Anderson's staff for their loving care, helping me meet cancer head-on and treating me with respect and dignity.

My experience at MD Anderson spans 21 years. Dr. Michael Wang has played a prominent role, coordinating the efforts of seven teams of specialists, the world's best. Treating multiple cancers simultaneously requires coordination, innovation and inspiration of nurses, physician assistants, schedulers, volunteers, surgeons and oncologists. I've had biopsies, surgeries, chemotherapy, radiation treatments, proton treatments, CAT scans and PET scans.

Dr. Wang and team continue to inspire me with their optimism, positive reinforcement and commitment to care.

I had my first bout of B-cell lymphoma in 1994, with the removal of 80% of my stomach and six chemotherapy treatments over 18 weeks. In 1998, the lymphoma



COURTESY OF TOPOLSKI FAMILY

returned. I had 28 radiation treatments.

In 2012, I learned I had two additional cancers; a fourth would come a year later. Six months after having four proton treatments for lung cancer, a pet scan showed the treatment was not successful. But that was on me. If you smoke, quit. Anderson has a smoking cessation program that works. Enroll now.

Early detection and a commitment to resources through the B-cell Lymphoma Moon Shot eventually will lead to more personalized treatments and help bring an end to this terrible disease. I'm proud to be part of a couple of studies that can offer markers for future patients. The odds are stacked in my favor, thanks to MD Anderson.

WHAT'S YOUR MOON SHOT?

Contact us at promise@mdanderson.org and tell us why MD Anderson's Moon Shots Program is important to you.

TARGETING TNBC

Lefkofsky Family Foundation funds promising research

“We’ve come to realize that a small number of institutions are pioneers in applying cutting-edge technologies in an effort to save lives. MD Anderson is one of those pioneers.” — ERIC LEFKOFSKY

BY LESLIE FRIEDMAN

Supporters of countless causes, Eric Lefkofsky, chairman and co-founder of Groupon and managing director of Lightbank, and his wife, Liz, recently gifted \$785,000 to MD Anderson to help find more effective treatments for triple negative breast cancer (TNBC).

MD Anderson researchers have developed a promising hypothesis on what causes one of the most aggressive forms of breast cancer to resist treatment, but they lacked funding for the study. With the donation from the Lefkofsky Family Foundation, the project

now can move ahead, says principal investigator Nicholas Navin, Ph.D, assistant professor of Genetics. Navin hopes that by gaining a greater understanding of TNBC, his team will greatly improve the availability of successful therapies for the disease.

Continued on page 11



Liz and Eric Lefkofsky

COURTESY OF LEFKOFSKY FAMILY

ESTABLISHED IN 2006 by Liz and Eric Lefkofsky as a private charitable foundation, the Lefkofsky Family Foundation aims to advance high-impact programs, initiatives and research that enhance the quality of human life. To achieve this mission, the foundation strives to:

- Ensure access to quality education
- Propel innovative medical research
- Improve fundamental human rights
- Expand cultural initiatives

SURVIVORS SAY

STEPHANNE DAVENPORT, a breast cancer survivor, is the treasurer of Montgomery County, Texas. Davenport has served in many leadership roles, helping found the Montgomery County Association of Business Women and earning the Women of Distinction award in 2013 from the Montgomery County Women’s Council of Organizations. Throughout treatment, Davenport served as a voice for her community.

I’ve known about MD Anderson ever since I can remember. But I first came to know the institution intimately when a family member became a patient there a few years ago.

In February 2015, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. MD Anderson was phenomenal. I was treated by Dr. Douglas Nelson, medical director at MD Anderson in The Woodlands. There wasn’t a question that Dr. Nelson couldn’t answer. There’s something extremely reassuring about that when you’re a patient.

I was approached by FAITH – Fighting Cancer in Montgomery County, an amazing nonprofit that not only helps cancer patients emotionally and financially, but also helps with educational and preventive care programs throughout the county. I

was asked to be FAITH’s 2015 Champion to support fundraising for MD Anderson in The Woodlands. This was a true honor because I experienced firsthand the benefits of the incredible work being done at MD Anderson. Thanks to the supporters in Montgomery County, we were able to raise nearly \$30,000 to support Montgomery County residents.

I still have a few surgeries to go, but I’m doing well. It’s nice to be on this side of it — I didn’t care for the other side too much. I want to continue to be a voice for survivors and show support to others going through treatment, because cancer can be very lonely. I want people to know that MD Anderson has the resources you need, if you ever feel alone and if you ever feel hopeless, and I’m honored to be a part of that.

Stephanne Davenport



COURTESY OF STEPHANNE DAVENPORT

Promise invites cancer survivors to share their reflections. Email promise@mdanderson.org.

AFF AND MD ANDERSON CANCER
UNTIL 20

UNTIL 20

Documentary celebrates the life, legacy of pediatric cancer advocate James Ragan

BY SARAH WATSON

James Ragan was only 20 when he died of osteosarcoma. His courage and compassion, however, live on through a documentary film that premiered Oct. 30 at the Austin Film Festival. The event was an opportunity to celebrate the life and passions of the Corpus Christi native who was an inspiration to all.

Approximately 725 film aficionados and MD Anderson supporters attended the screening at the historic Paramount Theatre, despite 15 inches of rain that washed out bridges and roads in the surrounding area. The weather did nothing to dampen the spirits of the film's co-directors and producers, Jamila Paksima and Geraldine Moriba, and members of Triumph Over Kid Cancer, an organization founded by James and his sister, Mecklin, to raise awareness and funds for pediatric cancer research.

Diagnosed at age 13 with a rare and often fatal form of bone cancer, James was a gifted athlete and Rice University student whom MD Anderson named Special Ambassador

in 2012. "Until 20" includes James' friends from Corpus Christi, Rice University, MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital and beyond, and his doctors, nurses and care team, including Valerae Lewis, M.D., chair of Orthopaedic Oncology, and Winston Huh, M.D., associate professor of Pediatrics, who were on hand for the festivities.

"Until 20" was among the top five screenings at the festival, winning the Marquee Feature Documentary Audience Award and the Hiscox Courage in Filmmaking Award. It went on to win the Audience Award for Documentary Feature at the 28th Virginia Film Festival.



COURTESY OF WWW.UNTIL20.COM



"Pediatric cancer has been abandoned for decades with no just cause, and **this film will change that and eventually triumph over kid cancer.**"

— MECKLIN RAGAN, JAMES' SISTER



HOPE WITHIN GRASP: Jim Ragan, James' father, recently presented \$400,000 to MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital physicians on behalf of the Triumph Over Kid Cancer Foundation. The donation will support the work of Andrew Futreal, Ph.D., chair ad interim, Genomic Medicine, through The Childhood Genomic Research and Sequencing Project (GRASP). From left: Cynthia Coffman; Cindy Schwartz, M.D.; Futreal; MD Anderson President Ronald DePinho, M.D.; MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors member Sam Susser; patient Robby King; Ragan; Valerae Lewis, M.D.; Anna Foy, R.N., formerly of MD Anderson; and Winston Huh, M.D.

PHOTO BY BARRY SMITH



"Promise me you won't forget about me after I'm gone — that you won't be so sad that you stop working to find a cure. I'd feel better knowing that someday this won't happen to kids like me."

— JAMES RAGAN, VALENTINE'S DAY 2014, TO HIS MOTHER, THREE DAYS BEFORE HE DIED

"I needed to tell James Ragan's story because it's about **justice in health care and the power of family love**. Even when life isn't fair, we get one chance to live a good life."

— JAMILA PAKSIMA, CO-WRITER AND CO-DIRECTOR

"Through James, we see the story of thousands of other patients who fight this disease every day. It adds fuel to our fire to find new and better treatments faster. **We will not give up until we reach that goal line.**"

— RONALD DePINHO, M.D., MD ANDERSON PRESIDENT



At the Driskill Hotel celebrating the documentary's successful Austin Film Festival premiere, from left: MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors (BOV) member Linda Mays McCaul; co-director/producer Geraldine Moriba Meadows; Rep. Michael McCaul; Mecklin Ragan; MD Anderson President Ronald DePinho; BOV Chair Mel Klein; co-director/producer Jamila Paksima Rowell.

COURTESY OF AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL



The Ragan family enjoys a red carpet moment at the entrance to the Paramount Theatre. From left: Gloria, Mecklin and Jim Ragan.

COURTESY OF AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL



From left: Rep. Michael McCaul and his wife, Linda, both of whom have been advocates for increased funding for pediatric cancer research, mark the occasion with Ronald DePinho, president of MD Anderson.

COURTESY OF AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL



SHOOTING FOR A CURE FOR PANCREATIC CANCER

VanLoh family supports moon shot efforts for early detection

BY LESLIE FRIEDMAN

WIL VANLOH, president and CEO of Quantum Energy Partners in Houston, fondly recalls playing catch and kicking soccer balls with his dad, Sidney VanLoh, who enjoyed mentoring young men about hard work, determination and sportsmanship, both on the field and off. When he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, it was a difficult diagnosis for everyone.



COURTESY OF THE VANLOH FAMILY

Nancy and Sidney VanLoh

After a year of radiation and chemotherapy treatments at MD Anderson, as well as undergoing the Whipple surgical procedure, Sidney VanLoh lost his fight with the disease in March 2013.

To express gratitude for the institution's dedication to

changing the course of cancer, the younger VanLoh and his wife, Jennifer, made a strategic gift to MD Anderson's Pancreatic Cancer Moon Shot. The VanLohs are inspired by the moon shot's focus on early detection and more effective treatments.

"My family's personal experience gave us a unique view of just how special this institution is," says VanLoh, who joined the MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors in 2015. "Every doctor, surgeon and nurse we encountered exuded compassion and professionalism, along with a never-give-up attitude. MD Anderson's multidisciplinary, functional team approach will radically change the course of cancer care and treatment over the next decade."

Jason Fleming, M.D., professor of Surgical Oncology and the elder VanLoh's doctor, is among the team leading the Pancreatic Cancer Moon Shot. Its recent advances include establishing MD Anderson's first pancreatic cancer high-risk clinic for screening and counseling.

"At this point there's no real method for early detection, such as mammograms to detect breast cancer, or any meaningful intervention," says Fleming. "This is the genesis of a high-risk clinic, one of only a handful in the country. With the potential to have a significant impact on the lives of thousands of people, this clinic will allow those with inherent risks to be tracked, traced and mapped. It's truly transformative."



MD Anderson is a **fantastic organization**, and this is our way of saying thank you for the work that they do."

— CHARLES COTROS



Charles and Connie Cotros

COURTESY OF THE COTROS FAMILY

TWO GIFTS IN ONE

Cotros family doubles impact in quest to end cancer

BY LESLIE FRIEDMAN

Passionate about MD Anderson and the hope it brings to patients everywhere, Charles Cotros and his wife, Connie, recently contributed \$265,000 toward the institution's goal to end cancer. With friends and family as patients, they divided their gift equally between two areas of significant need: the MDS/AML (myelodysplastic syndromes/acute myeloid leukemia) Moon Shot and inflammatory breast cancer research.

"We have such respect for the institution," says Charles, retired chairman and CEO of SYSCO Corporation. "MD Anderson is a fantastic organization, and this is our way of saying thank you for the work that they do."

Wendy Woodward, M.D., Ph.D., says the donation "speaks to the passion our donors have for those with inflammatory breast cancer, the most aggressive form of breast cancer."

"While it's diagnosed in only 2% to 5% of all breast cancers, it accounts for 10% of breast cancer deaths," Woodward says.

Through this funding, Woodward is able to make a novel

call for grants, including projects that will synchronize with existing inflammatory breast cancer programs, and she hopes to build interest and funding from there.

Guillermo Garcia-Manero, M.D., professor of Leukemia, and a co-leader of the MDS/AML Moon Shot, is grateful for the Cotros family's generosity.

"This is an important project for our lab, as it will generate three mouse models that will enable us to test various agents and see how they react to those therapies, and why they may not work to the extent that we'd like," he says. "This enables us to build new platforms and new mouse models."

Formerly of Houston and now residents of Memphis, the Cotros family hosted an event at MD Anderson last fall, gathering experts from both funded programs, as well as 30 friends, to learn more about the work they support.

"It was remarkable to have such a big group, most of whom have been touched by cancer," says Charles. "With the work that MD Anderson does, it can affect so many people from all around the world."

Continued from page 7

UPDATING THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Family invests in mobile technology to improve information access

BY LESLIE FRIEDMAN

In this digital age, technology plays a significant role in improving the patient experience at MD Anderson. Consider the task of helping patients navigate the institution's more than 14 million square feet in the Texas Medical Center. Thanks to \$60,000 in donations from the Hall Family Foundation, there's an app for that.

MD Anderson's mobile technology efforts are supported in part through the Gary E. Hall Fund for Cancer Initiatives, which the Hall family established in 2013 to honor Gary's life and his courageous fight against cancer. His wife, Debbie, and daughters Amy and Jessie hope the fund will help improve the lives of all MD Anderson patients.

Collaborating with Jeff Frey, director of the institution's Digital Experience team, the family contributed ideas to help create MD Anderson's first self-sustaining mobile app, designed to help simplify access to campus information.

"We were with dad at MD Anderson while he was undergoing treatment for medullary thyroid cancer, and, while we can't say enough about the patient care and treatment, we saw opportunities to enhance the technological infrastructure," says Amy Hall. "After he died, we worked with MD Anderson to figure out ways to make the systems easier for staff and patients, everything from scheduling appointments and messaging doctors to retrieving medical records and test



Debbie Hall, center, and her daughters, Amy, left, and Jessie

COURTESY OF E-HALL FAMILY

results, all through a mobile app."

Hall, who lives in Dallas, has become actively involved at MD Anderson and now serves on the institution's Patient and Family Council. Through her family's experience, she's become even more engaged in supporting efforts that help patients and family members feel more connected.

"Most people don't think about donating money toward technology, but it's helped move things forward and touch everyone, in a very important way, through MD Anderson's impressive information technology efforts and resources," Hall says.

The family's dedication to the project has been remarkable, says Frey.

"I have a great amount of respect for them in that they continue to invest in the lives of all patients," he says. "They've taken on this fight to help make patients' lives better and easier."

Nicholas Navin, Ph.D., who holds appointments in the departments of Genetics and Bioinformatics, will use his unique expertise to lead a five-person team in a novel TNBC study. Researchers will attempt to understand the origin and evolution of TNBC's high resistance to existing chemotherapy treatments. By first identifying the rare cells resistant to therapy, the researchers then will seek to target those cells and re-sensitize them to treatment.



"My wife and I have been dedicated to advancing scientific discovery through philanthropy for the past decade," says Eric. "Over time, we've come to realize that a small number of institutions are pioneers in applying cutting-edge technologies in an effort to save lives. MD Anderson is one of those pioneers and, as such, we're thrilled to be able to support its work."

"We're extremely grateful to Eric and Liz Lefkofsky, whose generous donation **enables us to move forward with our theory on what causes the illness to resist treatment, and how we can find the best solutions.**"

— Nicholas Navin, Ph.D.

'DO STUFF. DON'T WAIT.'

Cory Monzingo Foundation honors teen's memory



Cory Monzingo (center), with his brother, Clay, and sister-in-law, Kellie, prepare to cheer on the Aggies before the 2009 Texas A&M vs. The University of Texas Thanksgiving Day football game.

COURTESY OF MONZINGO FAMILY

BY ALLISON SCHAFFER

JEFF MONZINGO would love for you to ask him about his son, Cory.

"We talk about Cory just like he was here yesterday," says Monzingo.

Cory had just turned 19 and was starting his sophomore year at Texas A&M University in 2008. After feeling ill for weeks, Cory headed with his family to the emergency room. A CT scan revealed dozens of tumors up and down his abdomen.

Cory was diagnosed with desmoplastic small round cell tumors (DSRCT), a rare soft-tissue sarcoma. Part of his treatment included hyperthermic peritoneal perfusion with chemotherapy, a surgical procedure pioneered at MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital, with Andrea Hayes-Jordan, M.D., section chief of Pediatric Surgery.

"He never gave up. He never acknowledged that it was going to get him," says Monzingo. "You have to keep living life. Cory inspired us in that way. Do stuff – don't wait."

After Cory died in December 2010, the Monzingos established The Cory Douglas Monzingo Endowment for DSRCT Research. Two years later, the Cory Monzingo Foundation was created to provide more support for DSRCT research.

"We felt we weren't doing enough to help other people fighting this," says Monzingo. "There's no cure and there's limited treatment. We wanted to contribute extra funds to provide Dr. Hayes-Jordan with the support she needs to find a cure."

The foundation holds a dinner and dance every year around the time of Cory's August birthday. The event and online donations will provide \$325,000 in support for Hayes-Jordan's research over the next five years.

COLOR ME PINK BENEFIT BRINGS IN THE GREEN

The Emma Jacobs Breast Cancer Foundation funds \$200,000 for MD Anderson research

BY ALLISON SCHAFFER

After selling her successful recruitment business in 1998, Emma Jacobs was ready for a much-deserved break.

"I was pretty adamant that I wasn't going to rush back to work," says Jacobs. "Then someone said to me, 'Emma, you need to have a purpose.' And one came to me in 2001."

Jacobs was diagnosed with breast cancer that January. She started The Emma Jacobs Breast Cancer Foundation/Taking Initiative To Survive, a foundation focused on raising awareness and funds for breast cancer research.

"I'm passionate about what I do, as most survivors are," says Jacobs. "I'm very much a believer that the end of cancer is near, that we are going to get on the other side of it, that we will find a cure. That's what keeps me going."

Several years after her diagnosis and treatment, she met Anthony Lucci, M.D., professor of Breast Surgical Oncology, through her work as a patient advocate. Lucci's research and philosophy for patient care struck a chord, and Jacobs immediately decided to help fund his efforts.

"Although Dr. Lucci did not perform my surgery, he's the man I'd want for the job, had I known him back then," says Jacobs. "Above all, his concerns are the women he treats."

The Color Me Pink benefit began as a small fundraiser to support Lucci's breast cancer research (see sidebar at right). Proceeds from ticket sales and silent auctions over the past seven years have grown to \$200,000. Jacobs credits the success to her foundation's board of directors.

This year's benefit featured a painting by Lucci.

"Emma has been a tireless supporter of breast cancer research at MD Anderson and for breast cancer patients in general," says Lucci. "She's one of our most passionate advocates. We're fortunate to have her as a supporter."



Anthony Lucci, M.D., focuses his research on developing ways to identify, characterize and eradicate micrometastatic breast cancer that has spread from the primary tumor to the blood and bone marrow. Linda Lum participated in his micrometastatic disease research project after she was diagnosed with early-stage, lymph node-negative breast cancer.

"His research accurately predicted my recurrence risk, as I have recently experienced breast cancer progression to my bones," says Lum. "I hope this type of research identifies patients who have a risk of cancer spreading so there can be an early intervention."



COURTESY OF EMMA JACOBS

Emma Jacobs celebrates survivorship with her husband, Patrick Woerner (left) and son, Jake Woerner, at the seventh annual Color Me Pink benefit.



MAKING CANCER HISTORY® IN FLORIDA

On the eve of MD Anderson's 11th annual educational seminar in the Palm Beach area, a reception hosted by Louise and Red Armour at the International Polo Club in Wellington, Fla. gave guests an opportunity to meet with leading oncologists and learn about the institution's mission to end cancer. More than 150 Florida residents gathered Feb. 20 at the Colony Hotel to hear presentations by MD Anderson President Ronald DePinho, M.D.; Jim Allison, Ph.D., chair of Immunology; Joxel Garcia, M.D., executive director of the cancer prevention and control platform; and Kelly Hunt, M.D., chair ad interim of Breast Surgical Oncology. Topics ranged from research developments to cancer prevention tips to advances driven by the institution's Moon Shots Program. At the reception in Wellington, above left, Jeff Hildebrand, Louise Armour and DePinho, and above right, seminar presenters Allison, Hunt and Garcia.

THE FIGHT CONTINUES

Cells donated, endowment created to support rare cancer research

BY ALLISON SCHAFFER

Ryan Smith had a passion for all things science. "He considered going pre-med before deciding to become a petroleum engineer," says Robin Smith, Ryan's father. "When it came to his cancer, he was behind the research aspect 110%."

At 26, Ryan was diagnosed with stage IV adenoid cystic carcinoma (ACC), a rare cancer that arises from the secretory glands. Newly married, he was enrolled at Louisiana State University in an MBA program. Ryan fought for 20 long months at MD Anderson, undergoing chemotherapy, radiation, surgery and a clinical trial. Ryan even donated tissue to help develop cell lines that would potentially lead to new research and a change in the course of disease for future patients.

"There is nowhere else that compares to the research being done at this institution," says Smith.

Ryan passed away in June 2014, three

months before the birth of his first son. His family established the Ryan W. Smith Endowed Fund for Adenoid Cystic Carcinoma Research as a tribute to the spirit and grace he demonstrated throughout his fight, which will now live on in perpetuity through the endowment.

"Ryan would want others fighting similar battles to know that you've got to have faith," says Gethyn Smith, Ryan's mother. "That's what Ryan did and what he will continue to do through the work of the doctors at MD Anderson."



Ryan Smith

SKEET SHOOT SAVES LIVES

In 2015, Kimberly and Landon Smith organized a sporting clays shoot to honor Ryan's love for the sport and to benefit the Ryan W. Smith Fund. The inaugural shoot raised funds for ACC research. The tradition continued with this year's April 16 event in Port Allen, La.

Through the fund's support and Ryan's tissue donation, John Heymach, M.D., Ph.D., and Renata Ferrarotto, M.D., have identified Notch 1 mutations in Ryan's tumor and found that these mutations activate and drive ACC to an aggressive disease, defining a new subgroup of ACC that requires a different treatment approach. This discovery may help change the standard treatment for patients worldwide.

GETTING TO KNOW Nancy Loeffler

BY SARAH WATSON

A longtime advocate of volunteerism, Nancy Loeffler, of San Antonio, is a past chair of the MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors (BOV) and is the only woman to date to hold that position. In addition, she is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Cowgirl Museum; immediate past chair of the Briscoe Western Art Museum; vice president of the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo; a member of The University of Texas System Chancellor's Council; a member of the Board of Directors of The Cancer Therapy and Research Center at The University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio; immediate past chair of the advisory board of The School of Nursing at The University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio; and immediate past treasurer and member of The Alamo Endowment Board. Loeffler also serves as a member of the Margaret L. Kripke Award for Women in Cancer Research selection committee. She has served as a member of the board of directors of Southwest Airlines since 2003, is a consultant to Frost Bank and is a member of the Frost Bank Advisory Board.

How would you describe Nancy Loeffler?

Calm, loves her family and friends, brought up to have a sense of responsibility to one's community and mankind.

You've served in many roles, from president of the San Angelo Junior League to chair of the BOV. What motivates you?

My sister, Betsy, and I grew up in San Angelo, in West Texas, with a sense of social responsibility. My parents did a lot of community work and volunteering at school. I don't remember it ever being any other way. I did some volunteering in high school and have continued through my adult life with a number of organizations. I've gained so much from each experience.

Many of the organizations to which you devote your time reflect your Texas roots: the National Cowgirl Museum, the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo and the Briscoe Western Art Museum.

In my heart I'll always be a cowgirl. It's rewarding to be a part of these organizations and the great work they do for the community, such as the college scholarships made possible by the rodeo.

Does your family share your sense of volunteerism?

My three stepchildren have always been a part of my life, and when they were little they'd come with me to various volunteer activities. Now that they're grown and have families of their own, they all have volunteer commitments, as do their children. My stepdaughter, Lauren Powers, is a member of MD Anderson's Advance Team advisory board, and my daughter-in-law, Ashley Loeffler, is its immediate past chair.

How did you become interested in cancer awareness and fundraising?

Betsy's first husband was diagnosed with cancer 30 years ago. He lived about 17 months after his diagnosis. That really marked me. We were so incensed by his loss. That's what started it for me. When Mickey LeMaistre (Charles LeMaistre, M.D., former MD Anderson president) asked if I'd consider being on the Board of Visitors, I was proud to accept. MD Anderson has a special place in my heart.

Any pet projects?

Charline McCombs and I started trunk shows to promote the Children's Art Project, alternating at each other's homes for 15 years. The parties grew in popularity as the product line expanded. We enlisted friends, such as Estela Avery in San Antonio and Kit Moncrief in Fort Worth. It was fun. I've also enjoyed being



Nancy Loeffler

LIZ GARZA-WILLIAMS

Board of Visitors (since 1996)

- Chair (2009-2012)
- Chair, Membership Committee
- South Campus Research Initiative Steering Committee
- Making Cancer History® Campaign Executive Committee
- Development Committee
- Institutional Initiatives Committee
- Strategic Advisory Committee

a part of A Conversation With a Living Legend® in San Antonio. We've raised more than \$1.7 million.

Do you have other volunteer commitments at MD Anderson?

Since 2008, I've been the layperson on the selection committee for the Margaret L. Kripke Legend Award for Promotion of Women in Cancer Medicine and Cancer Science. The award honors Dr. Kripke, who served as executive vice president and chief academic officer at MD Anderson and achieved many firsts for women. I'm honored to serve with such distinguished physicians.

Has there been a turning point in your life?

In early 2007, when I was chair-elect, I walked through the doors of MD Anderson as a patient. The institution had become even more important to me. You always hear you'll be a number at MD Anderson. Yes, I felt like a number — No. 1. I've heard that from so many other people who feel the same way about their experience. Now, as a survivor, I'm committed on a much more personal level than when I accepted Mickey's invitation 20 years ago. I'm living proof that Making Cancer History® is truly within our grasp.

Any hobbies?

I enjoy needlework — petit point and needlepoint, mostly. I love being with my seven grandchildren.

What's most important in life?

I used to say what's most important is living life well. Now that means family and friends — that's what's most important, above all.

“I'm living proof that Making Cancer History® is truly within our grasp.

— NANCY LOEFFLER

Nation's cancer research budget gets 5% increase

ACT for NIH leads successful grassroots effort

BY SARAH WATSON

“The scourge of cancer that touches millions of people across the nation has **united our leaders to pass this legislative package**, and we are grateful this funding soon will be available to researchers at MD Anderson and other outstanding institutions.”

— RONALD DEPINHO, M.D.,
president, MD Anderson

In December, with House and Senate passage of an omnibus spending bill including \$32 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), MD Anderson leaders applauded a significant reversal in the recent trend in decreased federal funding for medical and scientific research. The 2016 allotment is \$2 billion over the past year's funding level and represents the NIH's largest budget increase — 6% — in more than 10 years. Of specific note on the cancer front, it also includes more than \$5 billion for the National Cancer Institute (NCI), a 5% increase over the previous year.

The news came after a months-long grassroots effort to inform legislators of the impact increased NIH/NCI funding could have on the future of cancer research in the United States. MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors (BOV) member Jed Manocherian, of New York, spearheaded ACT (Advancing Cures Today) for NIH, an initiative to restore the nation's priorities in funding innovative and potentially lifesaving medical research. Instrumental in this effort were Larry Bathgate, Paul Begala, Ed Bosarge, Rick Calhoon, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Marlene and Fred Malek, Linda McCaul, Mack McClarty, Pat Oxford and Andy Sabin, as well as Mark Moreno and Ed Miller of

MD Anderson's Governmental Relations office.

“The scourge of cancer that touches millions of people across the nation has united our leaders to pass this legislative package, and we're grateful this funding soon will be available to researchers at MD Anderson and other outstanding institutions,” says MD Anderson President Ronald DePinho, M.D., who traveled extensively to the national's capitol to discuss funding needs with legislators and policy makers. “This action sends the message to our patients, researchers, student scientists and advocates that, once again, medical research is a national priority. Science saves lives, and more grants will help us fulfill our mission to end cancer.”

The NIH, a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the nation's medical research agency and comprises 27 institutes and centers, including the NCI. MD Anderson received 274 awards from the NIH totaling almost \$123 million in 2015. Among those were 179 NCI grants totaling more than \$85 million. The NCI currently funds six MD Anderson SPORE (Specialized Programs of Research Excellence) grants focused on advancing new therapies and drugs to patients as quickly as possible.

PROMISE SPRING 2016

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F. CARTER SMITH

As a rising senior at Plano West Junior High School last year, Rissa Broudy was challenged by her Advanced Placement English teacher to address a meaningful problem that affects the lives of many. Rissa was inspired by the perseverance of her father, Scott Broudy, a melanoma and head and neck cancer patient at MD Anderson, and the care he receives at the institution. She saw the assignment as a way to spread melanoma prevention awareness and contribute to a family endowment named for Rissa and her sister, Linsey. In the process, she says, she learned the responsibility of a lifelong obligation and commitment to MD Anderson.

Using creativity, social media and business principles, I designed and sold shirts with “melaNoma” on the front and “MD Anderson Cancer Center” on the back. I also included a bottle of MD Anderson-branded sunscreen with each shirt sold. Over the next two months, I began to see the shirts being worn everywhere: school, grocery stores, the recreation center and restaurants. Some of the people I knew, and many I did not. But everyone said the same thing:

They loved the shirts, but they especially loved supporting the cause.

I was honored to deliver \$250 in proceeds to be deposited into the Rissa and Linsey Broudy Curing Cancer in Our Lifetime Endowment at MD Anderson. The opportunity to benefit MD Anderson in this way made a real difference to me, my family and my friends. Hopefully, this is my first of many lifelong contributions to the endowment over time.

Rissa Broudy



COURTESY OF THE BROUDY FAMILY