

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

U A B C O M P R E H E N S I V E C A N C E R C E N T E R



The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN), an alliance of 21 of the world's leading cancer centers, is an authoritative source of information to help patients and health professionals make informed decisions about cancer care. Through the collective expertise of its member institutions, the NCCN develops, updates and disseminates a complete library of clinical practice guidelines. These guidelines are the standard for clinical policy in oncology.

Find Us

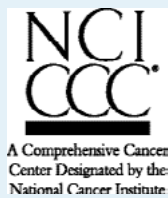


Advisory Board

Mrs. Georgia P. Cosmas	Charles A. McCallum, D.M.D., M.D.
Mrs. John J. Cowin	Mr. John L. McDonald
Mr. Frank H. Crockard III	Mr. Edward P. Meyerson
Mrs. Mitzi S. Davis	Mr. Howard B. Nelson, Jr.
Mrs. Tony Davis	Mrs. Dean Nix
Rep. Paul DeMarco	Mr. Richard H. Pardue
Ms. Susie Hand Denson	Mrs. Richard H. Pardue
Mrs. Betsy Dreher	Mr. L.C. "Foots" Parnell III
Mr. Douglas D. Eddleman	Mr. J. Wray Pearce
Mrs. Helene Elkus	Mr. Charles D. Perry
Mrs. Ann Florie	Mrs. Sullins Phelan
Mrs. Cathy O. Friedman	Mrs. H. Pettus Randall III
Mr. William M. Harvill	Mr. Guin Robinson
Mrs. Idie Hastings	Mrs. Katharine M. Robinson
Mrs. Ann Hayes	Mr. Michael D. Ross
Mr. David B. Hezlep	Mr. J. Callen Sparrow
Mr. James F. Hughey, Jr.	J. Terrell Spencer, M.D.
Ms. Sherri Jackson	Mrs. Jean H. Sullivan
Ms. Kate Kiefer	Mr. Pat Sullivan
Mr. Harold B. Kushner	Mr. W. Lee Thuston
Beverly F. Laird, Ph.D.	Mrs. D.A. Tynes
Mr. Frank M. Lynch II	Mr. George F. Wheelock III
Mrs. Robert P. MacKenzie III	Mrs. Susan B. Williams
Mr. Daniel H. Markstein IV	

Young Supporters Board

Mr. Walker Badham	Ms. Bonnie Monroe
Mrs. Kelsey Blair	Ms. Brooke Moor
Ms. Blakely Bowron	Mr. Robert Moore
Mrs. Kate Brinkley	Mr. Colin Moorhouse
Ms. Virginia Broughton	Mrs. Allene Neighbors
Mrs. Abby Brown	Ms. Jean Noojin
Mrs. Neillie Butler	Mr. Camper O'Neal
Ms. LaKisha Cargill	Ms. Rachel Powell
Mr. Andrew Case	Ms. Tanya Shunnara
Ms. Katharine Davis	Mr. Kelli Slocum
Ms. Anna Kathryn Ellis	Mrs. Betsy Styles
Mr. Randall Goggans	Mr. Sam Todd
Mr. Taylor Graham	Mr. Jose Vega
Mr. David Green	
Ms. Erin Green	
Mr. Evans Gunn	
Mrs. Mary Ann Harvard	
Ms. Ashley Harris	
Mrs. Betts Johnson	
Ms. Jessica Jones	
Ms. Emily Lewis	
Mr. Gaines Livingston	
Mrs. Holly Lollar	
Mrs. Sarah McDonald	

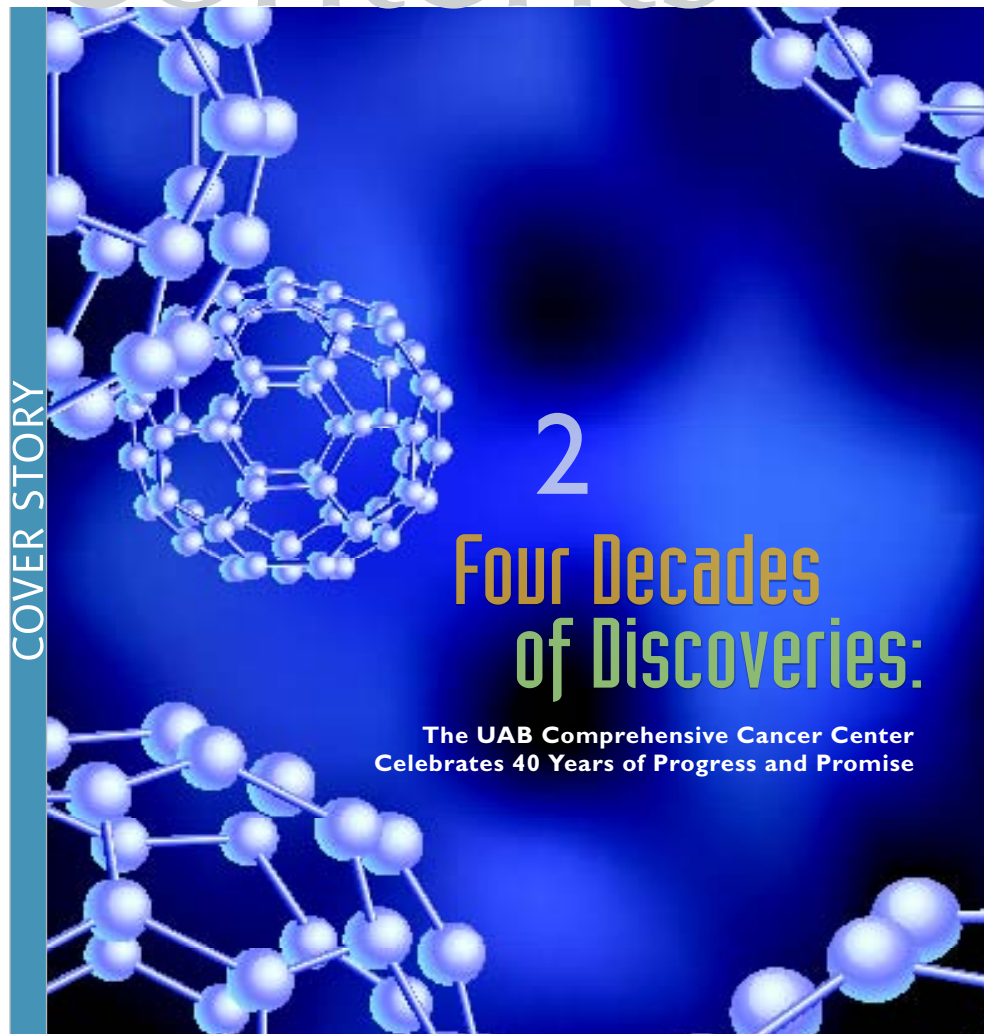


**Four Decades
of Discoveries:**

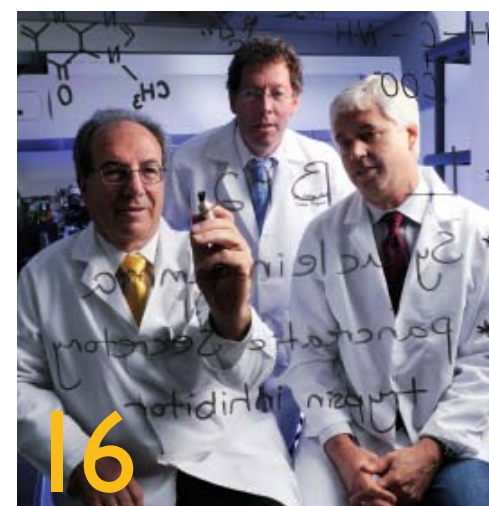
**Celebrating 40 Years
of Progress and Promise**



contents



2011 • VOLUME XXVII • NUMBER 1



UAB COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER

Director
Edward E. Partridge, M.D.

Deputy Director
Boris Pasche, M.D., Ph.D.

Associate Directors
Etty Benveniste, Ph.D.
Mary-Ann Bjornsti, Ph.D.
Wendy Demark-Wahnefried, Ph.D., R.D.
Martin Heslin, M.D.
Mansoor Saleh, M.D.

Director Emeritus and Advisor to the Director
Albert F. LoBuglio, M.D.

Senior Advisor
Kirby I. Bland, M.D.

Associate Director for Administration
Michael Bertram, Ph.D., M.B.A.

OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Senior Director
Sherri Van Pelt, M.P.A., OTR/L

Director of Development
Jeannie Horton

Director of Education and Supportive Services
Teri Hoenemeyer, M.S.H.A.

Director of Communications and Public Relations
Julie Wall, J.D.

Editor, Communications and Publications
Josh Till

Manager, Special Events and Board Relations
Miranda Wesley

Media Relations Specialist
Beena Thannickal

Program Administrator, Gifts
Katy Smith

Program Manager, Volunteer Relations
Callie Dunaway

UAB COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER MAGAZINE

Senior Editor
Julie Wall, J.D.

Editor
Josh Till

Medical Advisor
Edward E. Partridge, M.D.

Project Manager
Caperton Gillett

Writers
Caperton Gillett
Josh Till

Art Directors
Ron Gamble
Jessica Huffstutler

Copy Editors
Caperton Gillett
Josh Till

Photographers
Josh Till
Steve Wood

Production
Traci Bratton

Printing
UAB Print Plant

Produced by the Office of Development and Community Relations in collaboration with the UAB Periodicals Group.

news from the director



THIS IS A SPECIAL YEAR for the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center. We celebrate our 40th anniversary, having become one of the original National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated comprehensive cancer centers in 1971 after President Richard Nixon declared the "war on cancer." We have continued to contribute substantially to the world's understanding of cancer and translated that knowledge into prevention, early detection, treatment and ultimately survivorship.

In this issue of *UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center*, we focus on some of our major discoveries that have already made or will make a major impact on cancer care. With more than 350 basic, clinical and cancer prevention and control scientists, the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center will continue to have a major influence on UAB, the region and the nation.

We are particularly grateful for public support and philanthropy, which are critical to our mission. This support allows us to recruit promising new scientists and to provide pilot funding to demonstrate that their new, innovative ideas can make a difference. This allows them to be competitive for funding from the National Institutes of Health, the American Cancer Society and other foundations.

We soon will begin moving into our newly renovated Cancer Center building (formerly



Wallace Tumor Institute) on the corner of 19th Street and 6th Avenue South. During this 40th anniversary celebration, we will demonstrate our progress over the last 40 years and our promise of what is to come. We will also thank you, our supporters, for your steadfast support and dedication over the past four decades of truly amazing accomplishments.

You also will notice that our magazine has a new title. Though the name has changed, we look forward to still delivering the news and information you have come to expect from this great publication.

Edward Partridge, M.D.
Director and Evalina B. Spencer Chair in Oncology

The Director's Line

Stay connected to our progress in the fight against cancer at Dr. Partridge's blog—your direct line to one of the nation's leading cancer experts. uabccc.blogspot.com

COVER STORY

FEATURES

- CENTER PROFILE7
Lisle Nabell
- SCIENTIST PROFILE..... 10
Kent Keyser
- SURVIVOR PROFILE..... 14
Dennis Gregg
- RESEARCH UPDATE..... 16
Pancreatic Cancer SPORE

GIVING BACK

- SWEET ON A CURE 19
- BCRFA..... 20
- NEW BOARD MEMBERS.. 21
- ADVISORY BOARD PROFILE..... 22
Frank Lynch

QUICK TAKES

- RESEARCH BRIEFS..... 24
- NEWS AND EVENTS..... 26
- INSIDE VIEW..... 28
Cancer Center Directors

GIVING TO THE CENTER

There are a variety of ways to give to the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center. All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law and may be designated for the cancer or research area of your choice. Every dollar stays here in Birmingham and is directly applied to cancer research and treatment.

Donations may be made by visiting the Cancer Center's Web site, uab.educancer.com, or by calling the Office of Development and Community Relations at (205) 934-1603.

For a free subscription to *UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center*, please call (205) 934-0321 or send an e-mail with your name and address to info@ccc.uab.edu.





Four Decades of Discoveries:

THE UAB COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF PROGRESS AND PROMISE

BY JOSH TILL

In 1971, President Richard M. Nixon signed the National Cancer Act, a revolutionary piece of legislation that designated federal money for cancer research, treatment and education. It also established the “comprehensive” cancer center designation for institutions that provided the most advanced cancer care, research and education based on stringent peer-reviewed criteria.

THE UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center was one of the first eight centers to receive that prestigious designation, and since that time, it has solidified its status as one of the premier cancer centers in the United States—and beyond.

While UAB’s cancer program took a leap forward in 1968 with the Courage Crusade—which followed the death of Governor Lurleen Burns Wallace (see sidebar on page 5)—the investment from the National Cancer Act allowed the institution to become a major player in the war on cancer.

That investment—a \$254,334 plan-

ning grant from the National Cancer Institute—has paid off. Today, the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center is home to more than 350 scientists and physicians, and it generates more than \$100 million in research support from outside sources. It remains the only comprehensive cancer center in Alabama as well as in the six-state region of the Deep South that stretches from South Carolina to Louisiana and Arkansas.

This issue of *UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center* celebrates the Comprehensive Cancer Center’s 40th anniversary by highlighting some of its top discoveries. Some are recent,

ONE OF THE MOST PROMISING MONOCLONAL ANTIBODIES DEVELOPED AT UAB IS TIGATUZUMAB, ALSO KNOWN AS TRA-8. IT WORKS BY TARGETING SPECIFIC SITES ON CELL SURFACES KNOWN AS “DEATH RECEPTORS,” TRIGGERING CELL DEATH.

and some are the results of years of research. But all are examples of UAB’s status as an international leader in the fight against cancer.

BREAKTHROUGHS IN BREAST CANCER RESEARCH

For many years, the Cancer Center has been recognized as a leader in the research and development of monoclonal antibodies, which are laboratory-produced molecules that bind to specific proteins on the surface of tumor cells and interfere with cell function.

One of the most promising of these has been the monoclonal antibody tigatuzumab, also known as TRA-8. Developed at UAB by Cancer Center scientist Tong Zhou, M.D., tigatuzumab works by targeting specific sites on cell surfaces known as “death receptors,” triggering cell death. It was a

particularly exciting discovery because at the time, not many believed an antibody could directly induce cell death.

Tigatuzumab had previously shown promise in treating breast, colon, lung, pancreatic, brain and prostate cancer in animal models. Because of that, the antibody was moved quickly into human trials. In 2010, the Cancer Center launched the first trial of tigatuzumab for patients with metastatic triple negative breast cancer, which accounts for about 25 percent of all breast cancers and seems to show the greatest response to tigatuzumab.

Much of the early work involving tigatuzumab was funded by the Birmingham-based Breast Cancer Research Foundation of Alabama. Further funding to continue this work came in 2009 in the form of a \$6.4-million Promise Grant from the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation and the

Triple Negative Breast Cancer Foundation.

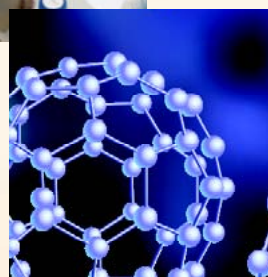
“This antibody is a perfect example of the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center’s strength in translating our laboratory discoveries into treatments for our patients,” says Cancer Center senior scientist Andres Forero, M.D., principal investigator for these studies. “It’s a major accomplishment and incredibly exciting.”

RESEARCH IN RETINOIDS

For more than 20 years, Cancer Center senior scientists Donald Muccio, Ph.D., and Wayne Brouillette, Ph.D., have been engineering cancer-fighting retinoids derived from vitamin A. Their laboratory has designed and synthesized more than 100 such compounds and patented many of these novel molecules.

One of the most promising of these compounds is UAB-30, which was selected for further tests by the NCI’s RAPID (Rapid Access to Preventive Intervention Development) program to determine its safety, toxicity and pharmacology prior to developing initial clinical trials.

Retinoids fight cancer in three ways: by controlling cell growth, by controlling differentiation to keep cells in a normally functioning state and by controlling apoptosis (cell death). UAB-30 was chosen for the RAPID



UAB COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER TIMELINE



1968 Death of Governor Lurleen B. Wallace from cancer initiates statewide fundraising drive known as the Courage Crusade.

1970 UAB cancer program organized, with Dr. John Durant appointed as director.

1971 UAB established as one of the first eight comprehensive cancer centers by the National Cancer Act.



1972-73 Courage Crusade raises \$5 million and, with additional funds from the National Cancer Institute, allows construction of the Wallace Tumor Institute and Wallace Patient Tower at UAB Hospital.



program because of its effectiveness in pre-clinical animal model breast cancer studies.

Most recently, Dr. Muccio and his team have been working with the University of Wisconsin, which has been conducting the first stages of the phase I trials in humans. “So far, they have found UAB-30 to show very little toxicity and very favorable pharmacology,” Dr. Muccio says. “The second part of their trial will be a dose-escalation study to better determine the toxicity level for patients.”

While the Wisconsin group is examining the effects of UAB-30 as a preventative drug, their results will influence UAB-30’s role in cancer treatment at the Cancer Center. “Once they have determined the drug’s toxicity, we will be using UAB-30 in phase II trials as a treatment for breast cancer patients here at UAB,” says Dr. Muccio. Those trials could begin as soon as fall 2011.

LEADING THROUGH THE LABORATORY

In 2009, UAB researchers announced the discovery of a new and efficient method to produce and study one of the cancer-causing strains of human papillomavirus (HPV). Of the more than 120 strains of HPV, 15 are

IN 2009, UAB RESEARCHERS ANNOUNCED THE DISCOVERY OF A NEW AND EFFICIENT METHOD TO PRODUCE AND STUDY ONE OF THE CANCER-CAUSING STRAINS OF HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS (HPV).

classified as high-risk because they often cause cervical cancer. Two of those 15—known as HPV 16 and HPV 18—cause approximately two-thirds of all cervical cancers.

International HPV research experts Louise Chow, Ph.D., and Thomas Broker, Ph.D., both UAB professors of biochemistry and molecular genetics, led a study that discovered a laboratory process for producing HPV 18, the culmination of more than 20 years of work.

Previously, scientists had been unable to produce HPV 18 in a lab setting, making it extremely difficult to study the virus and its effects. The new method discovered by Drs. Broker and Chow allows researchers to reproduce the entire infection cycle of HPV 18 in primary human skin cells. By doing so, this process could potentially unveil promising targets for drug design and antiviral

agents to treat existing HPV-18 infections as well as other types of the virus.

A NEW STANDARD FOR HEAD AND NECK CANCER

Since 2000, Cancer Center researchers have been studying the effects of combining Erbitux (cetuximab) with radiation for the treatment of advanced head and neck cancer. In 2010, the results of a decade’s work were published in *The Lancet Oncology*—and the findings were significant.

Researchers found that combining the two treatments improved the five-year survival of patients with advanced head and neck cancer by 10 percentage points, from 36 percent still alive at five years to 46 percent. The Cancer Center was a leader in the development and approval of Erbitux, a monoclonal antibody that attaches to and blocks

the epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFr) on cancer cells, influencing the growth and spread of those cells. Because most head and neck cancers heavily express EGFr, drugs such as Erbitux can potentially make these cancers more sensitive to radiation.

“This has changed the worldwide standard of care for advanced head and neck cancer and has become the internationally accepted regimen for treatment,” says James Bonner, M.D., lead author of the study and chair of the UAB Department of Radiation Oncology. “These findings are extremely significant because head and neck cancer is such a difficult disease to treat.”

PREVENTING SKIN CANCER: SUNSCREEN AND AN ARTHRITIS DRUG?

In 2010, Cancer Center researchers showed that the NSAID Celebrex (celecoxib) may help prevent some non-melanoma skin cancers from developing in patients who have pre-cancerous actinic keratoses lesions and are at high risk for having the disease. Led by UAB dermatologist and Cancer Center senior scientist Craig Elmets, M.D., the study evaluated the efficacy and safety of celecoxib as a chemopreventive agent for actinic keratoses, which are pre-

cancerous growths on the skin.

Celecoxib is in a class of NSAIDs called COX-2 inhibitors. Currently, it is used to relieve pain, tenderness, swelling and stiffness caused by osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and spinal arthritis. It also can be used off-label to treat painful menstrual periods and pain from other causes and is used to reduce the number of colon and rectal polyps in patients with familial adenomatous polyposis.

In animal models, Celebrex has inhibited the development of ultraviolet-induced pre-malignant skin papillomas, which are thought to correspond to actinic keratoses. The double-blind, placebo-controlled trial followed 240 subjects ages 37 to 87 with 10 to 40 actinic keratoses at eight U.S. academic medical centers over an 11-month period. At nine months after randomization, there was no difference in the incidence of new actinic keratoses developed between the placebo group and those receiving celecoxib. Compared with the placebo, celecoxib was highly effective in preventing non-melanoma skin cancers from developing in subjects who had large numbers of actinic keratoses.

“While celecoxib was not effective in preventing new actinic keratoses, the study raises the possibility that the drug is effective in preventing cancer from developing

Lurleen B. Wallace and the Courage Crusade

In 1967, Alabama Governor Lurleen Burns Wallace battled cancer—but because there was no specialized cancer center in the state, she was forced to travel to Houston, Texas, for treatment.



After her death in 1968, Alabamians rallied together in her memory to raise funds for a cancer hospital in Alabama so that no citizen would ever have to travel out of state for the best cancer care. This grassroots effort was known as the Courage Crusade, and the campaign garnered funds from people from all walks of life—from boxes of nickels from schoolchildren to large checks from prominent business leaders. By 1970, the Courage Crusade had raised more than \$5 million to build the Lurleen B. Wallace Cancer Hospital at UAB.

That same year, UAB officially formalized its cancer program with John Durant, M.D., as the first director. Federal and state money, along with the National Cancer Act’s planning grant, would soon be added to the Courage Crusade funds, and the seeds of the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center were planted.



1975 Program leadership recruited: Dr. Max Cooper (immunobiology); Dr. Charles Bugg (X-ray crystallography); Dr. William Crist (pediatric oncology); Dr. Richard Compans (virology); Dr. Seng-jaw Soong (biostatistics); and Dr. Charles Balch (surgical oncology)

1975-76

Wallace Tumor Institute occupied. Cancer Center has 94 members with \$6.5 million in research support.



1977

UAB demonstrates for the first time that a viral disease can be treated successfully with intravenous drugs.



1979

Lurleen B. Wallace Patient Tower opens.

1982-83

Dr. Durant leaves UAB to become president of Fox-Chase Cancer Center. Dr. Albert LoBuglio recruited from University of Michigan to be center director.

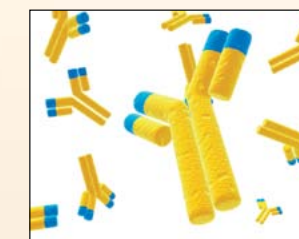


1984

Cancer Center Supporters Board organized with Lella Bromberg as first president.

1986

Supporters Board holds first fundraising gala, raising \$80,000.



1987

Cancer Center purchases one of the first DNA sequencers in the nation and carries out the first-ever trial of a genetically engineered monoclonal antibody.

from the precancerous actinic keratoses lesions,” Dr. Elmets says. Future studies are planned to establish whether other NSAIDs have the same properties as Celebrex as skin-cancer chemopreventive agents.

TREATMENT IN THE TIP OF A TAIL

In spite of more than 30 years of effort, the prognosis for patients afflicted with malignant gliomas remains dismal. Through the brain cancer SPORE (Specialized Program of Research Excellence) grant, the Cancer Center is working to translate the

laboratory-based efforts of its scientists into clinical protocols that address the needs for more effective treatments.

One of the most innovative and promising of these is led by Cancer Center scientist Harald Sontheimer, Ph.D. In studying the use of chlorotoxin—a poison found in the stinger of the giant Israeli scorpion—in the treatment of gliomas, Dr. Sontheimer has found that it inhibits the channels in the brain through which glioma cells travel. Patients who had just six doses of the chlorotoxin experienced a median survival of 12.1 months, compared to just 4.3 months in the control group. A national phase III clinical trial led by the Cancer Center began in 2009 and in interim evaluations has shown efficacy in treating gliomas.

SPORES BRING MORE SUCCESS

The NCI’s Specialized Program of Research Excellence (SPORE) programs are highly competitive and prestigious grants designed to quickly and safely move research findings from the laboratory bench to the patient bedside—a process known as translational research, and an area that the Cancer Center has long emphasized and earned recognition for its success.

The Cancer Center has experienced tremendous success with the SPORE program. In 1999, it was one of the first to receive a

SPORE in ovarian cancer: a \$9-million grant that supported several of the center’s translational immunotherapy, gene therapy and prevention efforts for that disease. In 2000, the center received a \$13.8-million breast SPORE, which has yielded several targeted therapies and anticancer compounds developed at UAB that are now in human clinical trials.

In 2002, the Cancer Center became one of the first two institutions in the nation to receive a SPORE in brain tumors, which has allowed the neuro-oncology program to become a national leader in the brain tumor field. The following year, in 2003, the Cancer Center received one of the first three SPOREs in pancreatic cancer.

Currently, the Cancer Center holds SPORE grants in breast, brain, pancreatic and cervical cancers. (The cervical SPORE is in collaboration with the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins University and the University of Colorado at Boulder.) The Cancer Center is among an elite group: Only three institutions in the United States surpass the number of SPOREs held by the center.

[Learn more at uab.edu/cancer](http://uab.edu/cancer)

THE UAB CANCER CENTER HOLDS SPORE GRANTS IN BREAST, BRAIN, PANCREATIC AND CERVICAL CANCERS. ONLY THREE INSTITUTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES SURPASS THE NUMBER OF SPORES HELD BY THE CENTER.

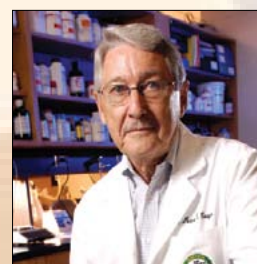


LISLE NABELL

BY CAPERTON GILLETT

UAB COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER SALUTES LISLE NABELL, M.D., ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE, MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF HEMATOLOGY AND ONCOLOGY FOR THE KIRKLIN CLINIC, AND DIRECTOR OF THE HEMATOLOGY/ONCOLOGY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM. HER CLINICAL INTERESTS INCLUDE BREAST CANCER AND CANCER OF THE HEAD AND NECK. AMONG NUMEROUS OTHER AWARDS AND HONORS, DR. NABELL IS A FIVE-TIME WINNER OF THE COBBS/RUTSKY AWARD FOR CLINICAL EXCELLENCE AND SEVEN-TIME DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE OUTSTANDING DIVISION TEACHER.

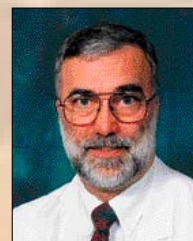
IN SCIENTIFIC research, some of the greatest discoveries are unintentional. For Lisle Nabell, M.D., her entire clinical career came as a surprise. Her interests throughout medical school had focused on pathology, but a resident during her hematology/



1987-1988 Dr. Max Cooper elected to National Academy of Science and named a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator—both firsts in Alabama. Center has \$28 million in research support.

1989

Center awarded \$4.8 million for monoclonal antibody trials with intravenous drugs, in competition with 30 other institutions.



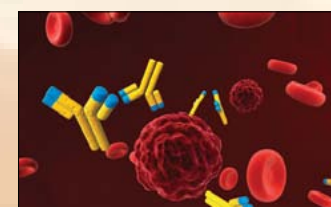
1991 Bone marrow transplant unit opened under direction of Dr. William Vaughan.



1992 Three-story addition to Wallace Tumor Institute adds 45,000 square feet of research space. Dr. Ed Partridge funded for cancer control program in Black Belt.

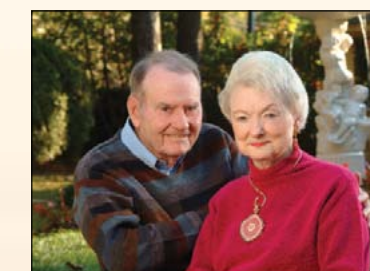
1993

Cancer Center launches gene therapy research effort.



1994

Cancer Center carries out novel trial of Rituxan, a monoclonal antibody, leading to its subsequent FDA approval for non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. Tade Thuston Memorial Breast Cancer Laboratory established. Dr. LoBuglio named first recipient of Evalina B. Spencer Chair in Oncology.



1996

Portrait of major Cancer Center supporters Herman and Emmie Bolden unveiled in Wallace Tumor Institute.

1995

Herceptin trials in breast cancer continue center’s leadership in monoclonal antibody research.

oncology rotation changed Dr. Nabell's mind in an unexpected way.

"She was very condescending," Nabell says. "She was the one calling the shots. When I watched her interact with patients, I kept thinking, 'I could do so much better than that.' That experience seriously galvanized me."

The resident's example "propelled me into internal medicine," Dr. Nabell says. And "the marriage of research and cutting-edge changes," she says, led her to hematology and oncology. She spent much of her fellowship at UAB in the lab of the late Jeffrey Kudlow, M.D., before the famous "three A's" of the practicing physician led to more time at the patient bedside, she says: "I was able, available, and affable." A new mother and a busy clinician, Dr. Nabell "had to reinvent myself," she says.

UNEXPECTED INTEREST

Dr. Nabell's interest in head and neck cancer also was unexpected—she was "thrust into it," she says, "because the doctor who was doing it previously left."

"THERE ARE A LOT OF COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS ONGOING BETWEEN SURGERY AND RADIATION ONCOLOGY, WHICH I LIKE." – Lisle Nabell

However, "it's really been a nice niche," she says. "There are a lot of collaborative efforts ongoing between surgery and radiation oncology, which I like.

"It's a really interesting field, and not just from a standpoint of pathogenesis," Dr. Nabell adds. "The patient population runs the gamut" from lifetime smokers with throat cancer to nonsmokers and nondrinkers whose cancer is seemingly inexplicable. "Pain management is a prominent need in this area, as is outcomes analysis, looking at late effects of surgery, radiation or chemotherapy," she says. "I wouldn't have thought that originally."

Dr. Nabell is intrigued by the complexity of the head and neck, she says—"speech,

taste, articulation, vocalization, swallowing—it's all going on in that area." And, she says, it's been a "fruitful area for investigation," working with the surgical group in developing new trials.

Dr. Nabell's other main roles at UAB take her away from the hospital. As fellowship director for hematology/oncology and The Kirklin Clinic's medical director for hematology/oncology clinical activities, Dr. Nabell spends more time behind a desk than at the patient's bedside. Maintaining program accreditation, seeing to reimbursement issues, scheduling chemotherapy and her other duties are as much an exercise in time and resource management as anything else, she says. But "to be perfectly honest,"

she says, "I have a sneaky love affair with administration. I like to make things better, see them be better and know I had a hand in it. It's my dirty secret."

Dr. Nabell's other secret is that her fellows aren't the only ones learning from their time in the hospital. "Part of being the fellowship director and being so intimately involved is that you're constantly challenged by the fellows and the residency team," she says. "Invariably, I come away knowing a little bit more because I had to go look something up so I could explain it better, or I get challenged and have to look it up to explain my position. I always come away a little better educated than when I started."

ON THE TRAIL

Most of Dr. Nabell's time outside of the office is devoted to her family, she says—husband, Bob, a chemist at the Southern Research Institute; daughters, Victoria and Kathryn, and son, Luke. They enjoy hiking, with recent trips to Olympic National Park in Washington and Glacier National Park in Montana. Or more accurately, she enjoys

it, and "the kids whine a lot," she says, "but when they get back and look at it, they're neat trips.

"I'm eternally grateful for having children," she says. "They really rounded me out." She learned to play the violin along with her children and continues to take lessons, although "my children have easily surpassed me," she says. "It's one of those things you're not looking for that kind of improves the quality of conversation at the dinner table."

That dinner table is usually packed. A self-confessed "foodie," Dr. Nabell enjoys cooking and grows a veritable forest of basil to support her pesto habit. "My idea of a good meal is probably a roast pork loin with a risotto or a pesto and pan-seared vegetables." And, she says, red wine—another field she stumbled into unintentionally. She recalls leading recruiting dinners as interim director of the division. "When it came time to order wine, the waiter would sort of halfway turn to me, and neither of us was sure what to do." She became "much more aggressive," she says, about moving beyond

her casual enjoyment of wine to develop a "working vocabulary.

"It's not a love affair, mind you, but I expanded my horizons," she says. "I was sort of forced into it."

UAB CANCER CENTER
as near as your telephone or computer

CANCER ANSWERS

To make an appointment or for more information

(205) 975-8222
1 (800) UAB-0933

CANCER CENTER HOME PAGE

uab.edu/cancer

DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Donor inquiries, publications, volunteer opportunities, speakers bureau, media relations, Web site, education and supportive services

(205) 934-0282



1997

Dr. James Bonner recruited to chair the Department of Radiation Oncology. Novel gene therapy trial for ovarian cancer launched.

1998

Cancer Center research support exceeds \$65 million.

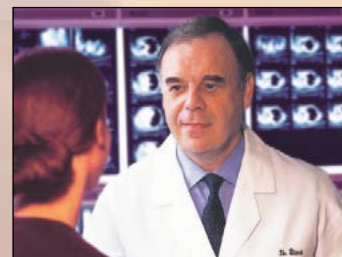


1999

Cancer Center receives \$9-million SPORE grant in ovarian cancer.

2000

Cancer Center receives \$13.8-million SPORE in breast cancer and funding from NCI to establish the Deep South Network for Cancer Control. Dr. Kirby Bland recruited as chair of surgery and deputy director of center.

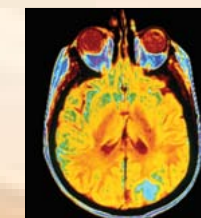


2001

Voncile Johnson Nelson Shealy estate names Cancer Center beneficiary of \$7.5 million. New outpatient clinic opens at Acton Road/1-459 to provide cancer services to over-the-mountain patients.

2002

Cancer Center receives \$11.8-million SPORE in brain tumor research.



2003

Center is awarded a \$4.5-million pancreatic cancer SPORE P20 grant. Award is one of only three nationally.

2004

Cancer Center is first in Alabama, and only 10th nationally, to offer the 3-D radiation system TomoTherapy for patients. Dr. LoBuglio steps down as director.





“BIRMINGHAM

IS AN EASY CITY TO LIVE IN, WITH THE OFFERINGS OF A BIG CITY BUT THE CHARM OF A SMALL TOWN,”

— Kent Keyser, Ph.D.

KENT KEYSER, PH.D.

BY JOSH TILL

UAB COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER SALUTES KENT KEYSER, PH.D., PROFESSOR IN THE UAB DEPARTMENT OF VISION SCIENCES, DIRECTOR OF THE VISION SCIENCE RESEARCH CENTER, DIRECTOR OF THE UAB HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGING FACILITY AND SCIENTIST IN THE UAB COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER. DR. KEYSER IS AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED EXPERT IN THE FIELD OF HIGH-RESOLUTION IMAGING. MUCH OF HIS RESEARCH INTERESTS INVOLVE NICOTINIC ACETYLCHOLINE RECEPTORS, WHICH ARE FOUND IN THE BRAIN AND RETINA AMONG OTHER BODY TISSUES AND WHICH MAY PLAY A ROLE IN SOME CANCERS. IN 2011, HE RECEIVED THE SAM BROWN BRIDGE BUILDER AWARD IN RECOGNITION OF HIS MANY RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS ACROSS CAMPUS.

KENT KEYSER, Ph.D., didn't realize that a walk on a sunny beach in California on a beautiful August day would eventually lead him to UAB.

“I was working at the University of California-San Diego at the time, and as I began to receive my own grants after becoming established there, I began getting calls and letters asking me to apply for other jobs,” Dr. Keyser recalls. “My wife and I were taking a walk on the beach and trying to decide what to do. We decided that if something interesting came along, we would look at it, as long as it wasn't in the Southeast. And the

minute you say something like that, your fate is sealed.”

That was in 1994. Just over a year later, Dr. Keyser joined the faculty at UAB as an associate professor in the Department of Physiological Optics. The decision to move was a good one, Dr. Keyser says. “Birmingham is an easy city to live in, with the offerings of a big city but the charm of a small town,” he says. “It's really great.”

A FUTURE SCIENTIST

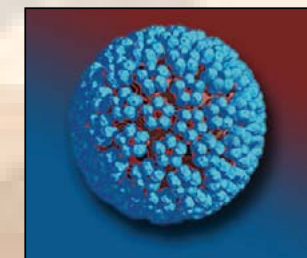
Birmingham is a long way from Dr. Keyser's roots. Born in Texas as the son of

an Air Force major, Dr. Keyser grew up all over the United States and around the world, including a three-year stint in Iran. “We lived there before the Ayatollah,” he says. “It was during my language-building years, so I grew up speaking Farsi.”

Growing up, Dr. Keyser remembers always being interested in science, even going so far as to make his own rockets—complete with his own rocket fuel. Once he made a rocket that flew several hundred feet in the air before exploding, causing a commotion among his neighbors. “That was the end of my rocket career,” he recalls, laughing.



2005 Dr. LoBuglio named director emeritus.



2006 Center scientists play active role in development of first-ever vaccine proven to prevent cervical cancer.



2007 Dr. Edward Partridge named director of the Cancer Center. Center receives renewal of breast cancer SPORE.

Dr. Keyser would eventually abandon rocketry and attend Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, where he received his undergraduate degree in biology. He went on to receive his Ph.D., studying neurobiology and behavior, at Stony Brook University (SUNY) at Stony Brook, New York. After receiving his Ph.D., he worked as a staff fellow in one of the laboratories at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland. It was while performing an experiment in that lab that he met his wife, Enid, a fellow scientist whom he married in 1984.

A HIGH-RESOLUTION VISION

Dr. Keyser spent two years at the NIH before returning to SUNY. After five years there, Dr. Keyser received an unexpected request: A colleague had been recruited to San Diego and wanted Dr. Keyser to join him. The Keyser family made the move to California, where they lived and worked for nearly a decade before UAB came calling.

Dr. Keyser's research involves nicotinic acetylcholine receptors, which allow for the movement of skeletal muscle. These receptors

are found in the brain, retina and other body tissues and may also play a role in some cancers. Dr. Keyser examines where these receptors are expressed in cells and tries to determine their role in normal cell function and abnormal cell processes. Because these receptors are so tiny, his work requires extremely high-resolution imaging equipment, such as a confocal laser microscope.

Confocal laser scanning is an imaging technique that allows for enhanced resolution—sharpness and amount of detail—of images and 3-D reconstructions. At the time of Dr. Keyser's recruitment, however, UAB did not have a confocal instrument that was up to date and functional. Dr. Keyser wrote several grant applications and was able to

assemble a confocal lab that would be able to sustain and grow his research activities.

At the same time, the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center was performing a review of its shared facilities—which provide necessary resources for investigators across UAB's campus—in preparation for its impending core grant renewal from the National Cancer Institute. Albert LoBuglio, M.D., then director of the center, approached Dr. Keyser about establishing the confocal imaging facility as a core shared facility for the Cancer Center. Dr. Keyser took Dr. LoBuglio up on the offer and earned the necessary funding from the NCI.

"The support from the Cancer Center was absolutely essential in establishing the facility," Dr. Keyser says.

"WE'RE NOW ONE OF THE
BEST-EQUIPPED IMAGING FACILITIES
IN THE COUNTRY." — Kent Keyser, Ph.D.



Today that facility is known as the UAB High Resolution Imaging Facility and is home to a confocal imaging system that is one of only a few of its type in the country. The facility now has four confocal microscopes and two brand-new electron microscopes. "We're now one of the best-equipped imaging facilities in the country," Dr. Keyser says.

Researchers from across the UAB campus use the High Resolution Imaging Facility, including more than 50 Cancer Center investigators, ranging from basic scientists to clinicians. Dr. Keyser and his staff work with investigators to collect and interpret images of cancerous and sometimes non-cancerous cells. Often, Dr. Keyser and his team simply offer advice on designing imaging experiments. Because of its location on the UAB campus, the facility can offer UAB researchers up-to-date equipment and expertise while charging a fraction of the amount an outside group would. As technology improves, plans for the facility continue to grow.

"With confocal imaging, the resolution capability is about 250 nanometers, which is less than a single wavelength of blue light," Dr. Keyser explains. "We're actually working on a system now that will give us resolution of 50 nanometers, which is smaller than the nucleus of a cell."

THE REWARDS OF THE JOB

Though his schedule does not allow much free time, Dr. Keyser enjoys snow skiing and "puttering" around his house. "I enjoy working with my hands," he says. He also recently inherited a stamp collection, which he is learning more about, and both he and his wife enjoy antiques. His wife also holds a position at UAB as manager of the Analytical

and Preparative Cytometry Facility in the Department of Immunology/Rheumatology.

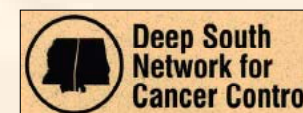
Though the Southeast was not part of his original plans, Dr. Keyser has no regrets about coming to UAB. "I get to work with people from all over campus who are doing research ranging from human psychophysics to molecular genetics," he says. "I've learned new things and gotten to know great people. It's been great."



2008 Dr. Boris Pasche recruited to lead Division of Hematology/Oncology.



2009 Center receives \$11.5-million SPORE in cervical cancer. Award is shared with Johns Hopkins University and the University of Colorado at Boulder.



2010 Cancer Center receives renewed funding for \$11.5-million SPORE in pancreatic cancer. The award is in collaboration with the University of Minnesota. Deep South Network named one of six National Community Network Program Centers.



2011 Center launches nationwide trial of the UAB-developed antibody tigatuzumab for triple-negative breast cancer. Breast Cancer Research Foundation of Alabama makes largest donation to Cancer Center to date: \$400,000.



**“UAB
SAVED MY LIFE.”**

DENNIS GREGG

BY JOSH TILL

ONCE A POLICE OFFICER, NOW A BAKER, DENNIS GREGG IS FAMILIAR WITH THE BITTER AND THE SWEET SIDES OF LIFE. BUT NOTHING PREPARED HIM FOR THE SHOCK OF A CANCER DIAGNOSIS.

AROUND Birmingham, Dennis Gregg is known as the “Baby Bite Man.” As co-owner with wife Carol of Birmingham’s Pastry Art Bake Shoppe, his famous Baby Bites—along with his cakes, cupcakes and other confections—are a staple at social gatherings across the city.

But there’s another title that Mr. Gregg is proud to wear: prostate cancer survivor. “I’d like to be the prostate cancer survivor poster boy,” he says.

Mr. Gregg was just 50 years old in July 1998 when a routine exam during his annual checkup revealed elevated levels of PSA

(prostate-specific antigen), a warning sign for prostate cancer. His physician sent him to a local urologist, and a biopsy confirmed the worst: He had prostate cancer.

“The first thing I thought was that I was going to die,” Mr. Gregg recalls. “I think that’s what most people first think, because

you haven’t done any research or talked to anyone. You’re just hit with the news that you have cancer.”

That piece of news was sobering for Gregg. “It was the most frightening news I’ve ever had,” he says. “I’m an ex-police officer, so I’ve been through some rough stuff. Nothing compares to hearing that you have cancer, though.”

After his diagnosis, Mr. Gregg immediately set out to gather as much information as he could about his disease, exploring treatment options to determine what would be best for him. Unsatisfied with the initial treatment suggested by his urologist, he was looking for a second opinion when a close friend offered him some advice. “He said, ‘You need to come to UAB. It’s a world-class facility, and this is where you need to be,’” Mr. Gregg says.

LAUGHING AND LIVING

Soon afterward, Mr. Gregg had an appointment at the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center with a multidisciplinary team of specialists headed by urologic oncologist Donald Urban, M.D., and radiation oncologist John Fiveash, M.D. Knowing he had a team of experts treating his cancer was comforting to Mr. Gregg.

“I loved the team approach,” he says. “We were able to sit down and make the best treatment decisions for me based on my circumstances and lifestyle. That was important to me.”

Mr. Gregg soon began a four-month course of radiation therapy, followed by a procedure in which radioactive seeds were implanted in the prostate to administer a more gradual dose of radiation. Because of the specific nature of his cancer—and because he was in such good physical health

prior to being diagnosed—Mr. Gregg did not have to undergo surgery or chemotherapy.

“I had a great response to the treatment,” he says. “I’d come home from treatment and work in the yard. I was already an active person, but I actually increased my exercise level. I didn’t want having cancer to change my lifestyle.”

Another way Mr. Gregg coped with his cancer treatments was through humor. He joked around with Dr. Fiveash and the nurses in radiation oncology. On the last day of his treatment, he emerged from the treatment room wearing his patient gown and his old graduation cap, from which he moved the tassel to the other side of his head to show he was finished with treatment.

“That was a big hit with the nurses,” Mr. Gregg recalls, laughing. “But I used a lot of humor because I didn’t want to think about cancer all the time.”

In less than a year after his diagnosis, Mr. Gregg was declared cancer-free and has remained so ever since. “I owe it all to Dr. Urban and Dr. Fiveash. UAB saved my life.”



LOOKING AHEAD

Mr. Gregg also credits the support he received from his family in helping him beat cancer. That includes his wife of 42 years, Carol; son, Josh, and daughter, Meg. Today, the family also includes two grandchildren: one who is nine and another who just arrived in February 2011.

He remains grateful to UAB and the Cancer Center—so much so that he was one of the first to sign up to participate in the Cancer Center’s Sweet on a Cure fundraiser when it launched in 2009 (see page 19).

Mr. Gregg encourages others facing cancer to learn as much as they can, do research, talk to their doctor and get a second opinion if necessary. Knowing what to expect and what challenges patients may face makes a big difference, he says.

As he enters his 13th cancer-free year, Mr. Gregg reflects on how cancer changed his life: It put things in perspective for him and in the end, made him a stronger person, he says. Oddly, “it was a great life experience,” he explains. “Life is full of tragedies, but you make the best of it. It makes you stronger for the next one.”

**“LIFE IS FULL OF TRAGEDIES,
BUT YOU MAKE THE
BEST OF IT. IT MAKES
YOU STRONGER FOR
THE NEXT ONE.”**

– Dennis Gregg



Pancreatic SPORE principal investigator Donald Buchsbaum with scientists James Mobley and Christopher Klug

CANCER CENTER RECEIVES PANCREATIC CANCER SPORE

BY JOSH TILL

The UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center, in collaboration with the University of Minnesota, has won an \$11.3-million grant from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to explore groundbreaking pancreatic cancer research, prevention and treatment.

THE SPECIALIZED Program of Research Excellence (SPORE) in pancreatic cancer is designed to draw on UAB's advances in genomic medicine and the promise of new anti-cancer agents pioneered by UAB researchers. The Cancer Center received a SPORE planning grant in pancreatic cancer in 2003; the new award is a full SPORE grant, recognizing the Cancer Center's leadership and accomplishments in the field of pancreatic cancer research and treatment.

Pancreatic cancer remains the fourth leading cause of cancer death overall in the United States, with more than 43,000 new cases of pancreatic cancer each year. The American Cancer Society projected 590 pancreatic cancer deaths in Alabama in 2010. Obesity—proven to be an epidemic in Alabama and across the country—has been linked to lower survival rates for pancreatic cancer.

“Given the current bleak outlook for patients diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, this SPORE grant gives us an opportunity to make real progress in diagnosis and treatment of the disease,” says Cancer Center Director Edward Partridge, M.D. “The partners in this project have the translational research

experience and know-how to move discoveries from the laboratory into the clinical setting with remarkable success.”

The grant will focus on leading-edge biomarkers: biological warning signs that cancer, such as a pancreatic tumor, is present or likely to develop. It also will test new therapeutic agents that have shown promise in preventing, slowing or effectively treating the disease. Many of the projects draw upon new discoveries in genomic medicine and combination therapies, says Donald Buchsbaum, Ph.D., a Cancer Center senior scientist and pancreatic SPORE principal investigator. Buchsbaum's fellow co-principal investigator is Selwyn Vickers, M.D., associate director of the University of Minnesota Masonic Cancer Center.

The partnership grant will fund four primary projects:

- **Biomarkers for earlier diagnosis.** Testing continues on a combination of imaging techniques and blood sampling that can help develop new screening tests for pancreatic cancer. Levels of currently known tumor biomarkers may be higher in people with pancreatic cancer, but by the time those higher levels are detected, the cancer may

be advanced and difficult to treat. The new techniques will help identify biomarkers that can be used in screening for pancreatic cancer as well as pre-cancerous changes in the pancreas. Project leaders are Cancer Center members Christopher Klug, Ph.D., and William Grizzle, M.D., Ph.D.

- **Targeted therapy with tigatuzumab.** Clinical trials continue on a class of anti-cancer molecules called monoclonal antibodies, which enlist help from the body's immune system to fight tumors. One promising antibody is the UAB-discovered tigatuzumab, which is used in combination with

**PANCREATIC CANCER
REMAINS THE **FOURTH**
LEADING CAUSE OF CANCER
DEATH OVERALL IN THE
UNITED STATES.**

other therapies to treat pancreatic cancer. Project leaders are Dr. Buchsbaum and Albert LoBuglio, M.D., director emeritus of the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center.

• **Genomic analysis of cancer regulators.**

Investigators will perform an in-depth genetic analysis of pancreatic cancer cells to help unravel the biological changes that lead to tumor growth, metastasis and treatment resistance. This genomic data will be used to design new clinical trials that target the specific genes and cellular pathways that regulate cancer growth. Project leaders are David Largaespada, Ph.D., of the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis; David Tuveson, M.D., Ph.D., of the University of Cambridge; and Christine Iacobuzio-Donahue, M.D., Ph.D., of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

• **Targeting pancreatic cancer stem cells.**

Testing continues on experimental agents that can regulate a small subset of pancre-

atic cancer cells called stem cells, which are believed to be linked to many cases of inoperable metastatic pancreatic cancer. One promising agent is a genetically altered virus, called an adenovirus, designed to attack cancer stem cells while leaving healthy cells untouched. Project leaders are David Curiel, M.D., Ph.D., of Washington University in St. Louis, and Masato Yamamoto, M.D., Ph.D., of the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

In addition to these research projects, the SPORE grant supports a pancreatic cancer tissue resource center, a clinical core and a biostatistics program.

“We are extremely proud that the NCI has awarded us this prestigious grant, making us one of the very few elite centers to have multiple SPOREs,” Dr. Partridge says. “It reaffirms our status as a leader in conducting cutting-edge research and translating that into treatments for patients. That’s the ultimate goal.”



Members of the pancreatic SPORE team (left to right) Patsy Oliver, Kyoko Kojima and Senait Asmellash (front); James Mobley, William Grizzle, Mike Ludwig, Donald Buchsbaum, Carolyn Maddox, Christopher Klug and Stacey Branham (back)

CANCER CENTER SUPPORT GROUPS

COURAGE COMPANIONS

One-on-one emotional support for patients and caregivers
(205) 996-5364

BRAIN BUDDIES

For patients with malignant brain tumors and their families
CATHIE ROBINSON (205) 934-2921

NEW BEGINNINGS

For newly diagnosed breast cancer patients
(205) 801-8266 OR 1 (800) 333-6543

US TOO

Prostate cancer support group for men and their families
JOHN DAVID FARRIS (205) 326-9439

ORTHOPEDIC ONCOLOGY SUPPORT GROUP

MICHELLE GRAY (205) 930-8564

CANSURVIVE GYN CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

For ovarian, cervical and endometrial cancer patients
MARGARET KEETON (205) 930-8676

LEUKEMIA AND LYMPHOMA SOCIETY PATIENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

ALMA DEL GROSSO (205) 934-0337

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

For anyone who has lost a loved one
JIM ELROD (205) 682-9441

RADIATION ONCOLOGY SUPPORT GROUP

KAREN SHROUT (205) 975-5628

YOUNG BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS SUPPORT GROUP

For those diagnosed before the age of 45
HILLARY PARMER (205) 930-8870



In November, more than 75 restaurants, cafés and eateries across Birmingham participated in the second annual **Sweet on a Cure** campaign. For one week, each restaurant donated 100 percent of the proceeds from a specific dessert to the Cancer Center for research.

The event was once again a tremendous success, generating significant coverage about the work being done at the Cancer Center and raising \$15,000.

2010 Participating Restaurants

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Another Broken Egg Café | Donut Joe's | MAFIAoZA's | Urban Standard |
| Avo | Dram | Margarita Grill | V. Richards Market |
| B&A Warehouse | Edgar's Bakery | Nabeel's | Whataburger |
| The Baskits | Famous Fred's | Nothing but Noodles | Yogurt Mountain |
| Bellinis Ristorante & Bar | Fire | O'Carrs Downtown | |
| Big Blue Bagel | The Fish Market | Open Door Café | |
| Bongiorno Italian Restaurant | Flying Spoon at Embassy Suites | Pastry Art Bake Shoppe | |
| Bottega Restaurant | Frankie's Market Café | Petrucelli's Italian Eatery | |
| Brannon's: A Public House | Fultondale Bakery | Ragtime Café | |
| The Bright Star | Gilchrist Soda Fountain | Rojo | |
| Bruster's Real Ice Cream | Hamburger Heaven | Silvertron Café | |
| Café Lazio | Highlands Bar and Grill | Sol y Luna | |
| Cantina! | Homewood Gourmet | Ted's Restaurant | |
| Chappy's Deli | Hot and Hot Fish Club | Trattoria Centrale | |
| Chez Fonfon | Icing on the Cake | | |
| Crape Myrtle's Café | Indie Candy | | |
| Crestline Bagel Company | Irondale Café | | |
| Crestline Seafood Company | Iz Café | | |
| Culinard Café | Iz Too | | |
| Demetri's BBQ | Jim 'N Nick's Bar-B-Q | | |
| DeVinci's of Homewood | Joe Muggs | | |



BCRFA MAKES LARGEST DONATION YET

THIS SPRING, THE BREAST CANCER RESEARCH FOUNDATION OF ALABAMA (BCRFA), A LONGTIME AND DEDICATED SUPPORTER OF THE UAB COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER, PRESENTED ITS LARGEST ANNUAL GIFT TO DATE: \$400,000.



Above: Edward Partridge with BCRFA board members. Right (left to right): BCRFA President Dianne Mooney, Andres Forero and Dolly O'Neal.



Since its inception in 1996, the BCRFA has made an annual donation to the Cancer Center with the proceeds from all its fundraising efforts during the previous year, which include sales of specialty breast cancer license plates featuring a pink ribbon and the phrase “funding research in Alabama,” BCRFA events and contributions from the community. This year’s donation brings the Birmingham-based organization’s cumulative total for UAB to nearly \$3 million.

“Our friends at the Breast Cancer Research Foundation of Alabama have enabled our breast cancer research program to become one of the most vigorous and well-regarded programs in the nation,” says Edward Partridge, M.D., Cancer Center director. “The foundation has been instrumental in making that progress possible. Their dedication is saving lives every day,

and we are grateful for their steadfast partnership in the fight against cancer.”

Half of the BCRFA gift will be used as the lead contribution in a fundraising effort to establish an endowed chair in honor of Andres Forero, M.D., a Cancer Center senior scientist, BCRFA board member and nationally recognized expert in breast cancer research.

The foundation has designated the other half of the gift to support breast cancer research in memory of three remarkable women who made significant contributions to the breast cancer community during their lifetimes: Violeta Caceres, O.D., known in

Birmingham as “the Pink Lady” and recognized for her breast cancer advocacy; Kathy Kemp, an award-winning journalist with *The Birmingham News*; and Judith F. Todd, one of Alabama’s top estate-planning and probate attorneys.

In their memories—and in the memories of so many others who have lost their fight against breast cancer during this past year—the BCRFA has set its highest-ever fundraising goal of \$500,000 for 2011.

The BCRFA was established in 1996 by Dolly O’Neal, a two-time breast cancer survivor, and Bruce Sokol, whose wife, D.D., was undergoing breast cancer treatment at the time. Since then, the foundation has been a leader in raising critical research funds to support early projects that enabled the Cancer Center to receive additional, high-profile grants and recruit and retain world-renowned breast cancer researchers.

The BCRFA provided pilot funding for key breast cancer research that led to the receipt and renewal of the Cancer Center’s Breast Cancer SPORE (Specialized Program of Research Excellence), a five-year, \$11.5-million grant from the National Cancer Institute. Their support also helped fund important pre-clinical lab testing that led to a \$6.4-million Promise Grant from Susan G. Komen for a Cure and the Triple Negative Breast Cancer Foundation in 2009.

To make a gift to the endowment, contact Jeannie Horton at (205) 934-6326 or jhorton@uab.edu.



Above: New Young Supporters members (left to right) Bonnie Monroe and Kelli Slocum (front); David Green, Kate Brinkley, Brooke Moor, Anna Kathryn Ellis and Katherine Davis (back). Right: New Advisory Board members (left to right) Helene Elkus, D.A. Tynes, Susan Williams and Mitzi Davis.



CANCER CENTER BOARDS NAME NEW MEMBERS, OFFICERS

BY JOSH TILL

THE ADVISORY BOARD OF THE UAB COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER HAS ELECTED FIVE NEW MEMBERS AND A SLATE OF OFFICERS TO ITS ROSTER FOR 2010-11.

SERVING as president is Ed Meyerson of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, P.C.; president-elect I, Fouts Parnell, with InterFirst Capital, LLC; president-elect II, William Harvill, of Intermark Group; and secretary/treasurer, Jeanie MacKenzie, a community volunteer.

New members elected to the board are Mitzi Davis, Susie Denson, Helene Elkus, D.A. Tynes and Susan Williams. While each of these women has been touched in some way by cancer, both Ms. Denson and Mrs. Tynes are breast cancer survivors.

The Cancer Center’s Young Supporters

Board also elected new members and officers for 2010-11.

Serving as president is Sam Todd of Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP; vice president, Camper O’Neal, with Merrill Lynch; secretary, Andrew Case, of Harbert Management Corporation; and treasurer, Evans Gunn, with Regions Financial Corporation.

New members elected to the board are Blakely Bowron, Kate Brinkley, Virginia Broughton, Katherine Davis, Anna Kathryn Ellis, David Green, Jessica Jones, Bonnie Monroe, Brooke Moor, Colin Moorhouse,

Rachel Powell, Kelli Slocum and Jose Vega.

The Young Supporters Board of the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center was established in 2006 to introduce the next generation of Alabamians to the importance of cancer research and awareness. The board comprises up-and-coming professionals between the ages of 25 and 34.

The Advisory Board of the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center is a volunteer group of community leaders, many of whom have been touched by cancer in some way. The mission of the board is to raise funds, provide patient amenities and increase awareness of the Cancer Center. Since its inception in 1984, the Advisory Board has raised more than \$11 million for the center.



FRANK LYNCH

LIKE MANY PEOPLE, FRANK LYNCH'S FAMILY HAS BEEN TOUCHED BY CANCER. AND LIKE MANY PEOPLE, IT INSPIRED HIM TO GET INVOLVED—AN INSPIRATION THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY LEAD HIM TO THE ADVISORY BOARD OF THE UAB COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER.

MR. LYNCH joined the Advisory Board in 1995 at the urging of friend and colleague Jim Hayes, a board member and dedicated supporter of the Cancer Center. "Knowing the fine person Jim was, I was honored to be involved with any cause that he supported," Mr. Lynch recalls. "I said, 'Jim, if you're on board, it's good enough for me.'"

The Cancer Center also holds a personal importance to Mr. Lynch—his father was diagnosed with prostate cancer in the early 1990s. "Most of my family had heart problems, so my father's cancer was a first for us," he says.

Thanks to a PSA (prostate-specific antigen) test, Mr. Lynch's father's cancer was caught early, though ongoing treatment—which he received at the Cancer Center—was necessary. The elder Lynch's cancer diagnosis was an eye-opener for his son. "If my father had waited, he wouldn't be here today," he

says. "I can't stress enough the importance of men having annual screenings for prostate cancer. Screening saved my father's life."

Mr. Lynch was able to see firsthand the compassionate care that the Cancer Center provides—and he continues to see it today. "I still take my father to see Graeme Bolger, M.D., for periodic checkups," Mr. Lynch says. "Dr. Bolger is very compassionate, as is all the staff in his clinic."

In his 15 years on the Advisory Board, Mr. Lynch has served two terms as president and has served on all of the board's committees. A finance graduate of Auburn University, Mr. Lynch actually attended UAB during his freshman year. "When I was at UAB, undergraduate enrollment was about 4,000 students. The growth and contribution to medicine and other fields has been phenomenal since I was a student 35 years ago," he says. "We are extremely fortu-

nate to have a nationally recognized cancer center in Birmingham and our state."

Mr. Lynch is retired from First Commercial Bank, where he was one of the bank's founding officers in 1985. He and his wife of 28 years, Mary Joyce—who was his next-door neighbor during his childhood—have two children, Morgan Rogers and Frank Lynch III, and two grandchildren who "are the joys of our lives," Mr. Lynch says. "We have two grandchildren now with two more on the way."

In his spare time, Mr. Lynch enjoys fishing and hunting. He also spends time gardening, something that both of his grandfathers enjoyed. Away from the outdoors, he has been involved for several years with Internet/mail sales and marketing.

Though his term as Advisory Board president ended a few years ago, Mr. Lynch remains an active member of the board and is committed to the group's mission. "I've developed a real love for the board and the Cancer Center," he says. "It's such an impressive and wonderful organization. I want people to know about the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center."

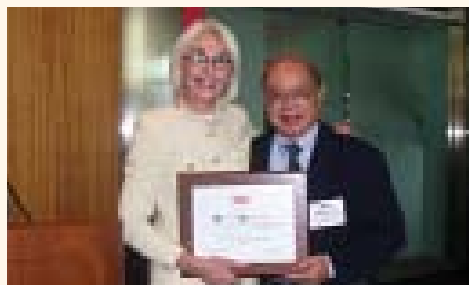
"I'VE DEVELOPED A REAL LOVE FOR THE BOARD AND THE CANCER CENTER."

— Frank Lynch

Soong Receives AJCC Award

SENG-JAW SOONG, PH.D., professor emeritus of medicine, director emeritus of the Biostatistics and Bioinformatics Unit, and associate director emeritus of the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center, received a special recognition from the American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) at its recent annual meeting in Chicago for his “efforts to advance AJCC TNM (tumor, node, metastasis) staging system and classification of melanoma through development of pioneering technology for the prediction of patient-specific clinical outcome,” which is useful for patient treatment planning and management.

Dr. Soong is internationally known for his research on melanoma, particularly in the area of statistical modeling of melanoma prognosis and staging. As chair of the AJCC Statistical Task Force and vice chair of the Melanoma Staging Committee, Dr. Soong has played a vital role in reshaping the criteria for staging and classification of melanoma and has demonstrated the value of evidence-based staging, which has influenced many additional cancer-staging committees. He continues to play an important role in the AJCC as it moves into the area of electronic staging and predictive tools, for which his contributions have been pioneering.



Grizzle Named Senior Editor

WILLIAM E. GRIZZLE, M.D., Ph.D., a longtime member of the editorial board of *Clinical Cancer Research*, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), has accepted an invitation to serve as a senior editor of the publication.

Dr. Grizzle is a senior scientist in the Cancer Center and director of the UAB Tissue Collection and Banking Facility, which provides tissue samples to UAB researchers. He also is a past president of the International Society of Biological and Environmental Repositories (ISBER).



In December 2010, Dr. Grizzle delivered the plenary keynote address at the Eighth Annual Conference of the Australasian Biospecimens Network Association (ABNA) in Brisbane, Australia. He spoke on factors that affect the quality and usefulness of tissues in biomedical research.

Deep South Network Receives Renewal

THE UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center’s Deep South Network for Cancer Control has received a five-year, \$6-million grant from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to continue its work in reducing cancer disparities in minority and medically underserved poor populations in Alabama and Mississippi.

The funding, from the NCI’s Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities, establishes UAB as one of six National Community Network Program Centers. This is the third five-year NCI grant the Deep South Network has received.

The new grant will fund the network’s first randomized community interventions into cancer research within its target areas. The research project will look at the sociocultural influence on dietary intake among black women in the Deep South and assess the potential of regular

physical activity to reduce substantially the risk for developing and dying from cancer. Monica Baskin, Ph.D., associate professor of preventive medicine, will lead these efforts by conducting a 20-week weight-loss intervention in eight of the 22 counties within the network that provide peer and community support during the 24-month intervention.

The Deep South Network targets two poor, rural regions—Alabama’s Black Belt and the Mississippi Delta—and two urban areas—Jefferson County, Ala., and the Hattiesburg/Laurel, Miss., metropolitan region. The network has trained more than 1,000 volunteers, called community health advisors trained as research partners (CHARPs), in these communities to educate family and friends about the importance of prevention and early detection of cancer.

Experimental Drug for Hodgkin’s Lymphoma Shows Promise

AN EXPERIMENTAL drug for Hodgkin’s lymphoma studied at the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center has shown beneficial effects in stopping tumor growth with moderate side-effects, according to findings published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

The phase 1 trial was designed to establish a maximum tolerated dose of brentuximab vedotin (SGN-35), a combination of the monoclonal antibody cAC10 and an antitubulin agent, monomethyl auristatin E (MMAE), developed by Seattle Genetics. Using a dose-escalating protocol, the researchers administered a dose of 0.1 to 3.6 mg per kilogram of body weight.

“Our primary goal was to establish the

maximum tolerated dose, one that would not cause adverse side effects of SGN-35,” says Andres Forero, M.D., Cancer Center senior scientist and a senior author of the study. “In the process, we were pleased to discover that positive responses were observed in 17 of the 45 patients involved in the study, including 11 complete remissions.”

As many as 30 percent of Hodgkin’s disease patients don’t respond to conventional therapy, and the disease kills an estimated 1,300 people annually in the United States alone. Because Hodgkin’s disease frequently strikes young adults, these premature deaths can have a significant social impact.

Dr. Forero says tumor regression lasting more than nine months was noted in 36 of the 42 patients who could be evaluated.

Research was funded by Seattle Genetics. Collaborators are the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center; Washington University, St. Louis, and Weill Medical College of Cornell University.



Almeida Joins Cancer Center

JONAS S. ALMEIDA, Ph.D., has joined the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center as a senior scientist and professor of pathology. He is the inaugural director of the Department of Pathology’s new Division of Informatics, which began in January 2011 with his arrival.

Prior to coming to UAB, Dr. Almeida was a professor of bioinformatics at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center and an adjunct professor at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston from 2006 to 2010. Prior to that, he served as an associate professor of bioinformatics at the Medical University of South



Carolina in Charleston.

Born in Portugal and raised in Angola, Dr. Almeida eventually returned to Lisbon, receiving his undergraduate degree at the University of Lisbon. After obtaining his Ph.D. in biological engineering in Lisbon at the University Nova in 1995, he came to the United States as a postdoctoral fellow in microbial ecology at the University of Tennessee, Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Dr. Almeida has 120 peer-reviewed publications to his name and is an internationally recognized authority in the field of bioinformatics. His main areas of interest include

bioinformatics, computational statistics and computational infrastructure for integration of data acquisition and analysis. Dr. Almeida is involved in a number of collaborative research initiatives including the Center for Translational Science Awards and the Cancer Genome Atlas.

The Division of Informatics pursues computational research and tool development to integrate biomolecular and clinical data and advance personalized medicine. Accordingly, collaborative research is configured to involve computational statisticians and clinical researchers. The resources developed and maintained at the division to support this research range from novel integrative algorithms and the corresponding software libraries to novel integrative computational infrastructure.

Hyundai Hope on Wheels

LAST FALL, Hyundai Hope on Wheels visited the UAB Division of Pediatric Hematology-Oncology at Children's Hospital to present a \$100,000 Hope Grant. The grant will provide funding for the expansion of three childhood cancer programs: the UAB Pediatric Developmental Therapeutics Program, the UAB Childhood Cancer Survivorship Program and the Hope and Cope Psychosocial Support Program.

Hyundai Hope on Wheels works to raise awareness of childhood cancer with national television commercials, materials in its dealerships and \$6.8-million worth of Hope Grants to hospitals and nonprofit organizations across the country to help fight the disease. At the end of 2010, Hope on Wheels had donated more than \$23 million to fight childhood cancer, which remains the leading cause of death by disease among U.S. children 1 to 14 years of age.



uab.edu/cancer

Partridge Elected ACS President

UAB COMPREHENSIVE Cancer Center director Edward Partridge, M.D., has been named president of the American Cancer Society (ACS) National Board of Directors for 2010-11.

Dr. Partridge was elected to lead the board at the ACS's annual meeting in Atlanta in November. The ACS National Assembly and National Board of Directors—the primary governing bodies of the ACS—are composed entirely of elected volunteers. Founded in 1913, the ACS is the nation's largest volunteer health organization.

Dr. Partridge is a longtime volunteer for ACS and has served in numerous capacities for more than 30 years, including chair of the Mid-South Division. He also is a former chair of the Commission on Cancer

for the American College of Surgeons and a past president of the Jefferson County Medical Society, Alabama Society of Clinical Oncology and Alabama Chapter of the American College of Surgeons. Dr. Partridge won the *Birmingham Business Journal's* 2009 Health Care Heroes physician provider award.

A renowned women's cancer doctor and a leader in the fight to reduce ethnicity- and race-based cancer disparities, Dr. Partridge chairs the cervical cancer-screening guidelines panel for the National Comprehensive Cancer Network. He also is the principal investigator for the Deep South Network for Cancer Control, a National Cancer Institute-funded project focused on training, data-gathering and educational outreach in rural and urban areas in Alabama and Mississippi.



Pink Zone Benefits Cancer Center

ON February 10, the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center once again partnered with the UAB Blazers to host Pink Zone, an event to raise money and awareness for breast cancer. Breast cancer survivors, families and friends turned Bartow Arena pink to cheer the women's basketball team in their victory over the University of Tulsa Hurricanes. Pink Zone raised \$3,500 for breast cancer research at the Cancer Center.

Cancer Center Hosts Progress & Promise

ON JANUARY 6, the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center hosted its second annual Progress & Promise report to celebrate the progress made in the fight against cancer and the promise for the future. Nearly 200 people gathered at the Alys Robinson Stephens Performing Arts Center to hear Cancer Center and UAB senior leadership discuss the impact of the center's work.

Speakers included Cancer Center director Edward Partridge, M.D.; director emeritus Albert LoBuglio, M.D.; chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology James Bonner, M.D.; and UAB President Carol Z. Garrison, Ph.D. Breast cancer survivor Dianne Poe of Lanett, Alabama, also shared her story of how a clinical trial at the Cancer Center saved her life. Progress & Promise 2011 is scheduled for November.



Miranda Wesley Joins Development and Community Relations

MIRANDA WESLEY has joined the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center's Office of Development and Community Relations as the program manager of special events and board relations. In her new position, she is responsible for managing the center's various fundraising and community awareness events, including the annual ArtBLINK Gala. She also serves as the liaison between the Cancer Center and its Advisory and Young Supporters Boards.

A native of Birmingham, Mrs. Wesley received her bachelor's degree in communication from the University of Alabama, with a major in public relations and minor



in computer science. Prior to joining the Cancer Center, she served as assistant director of marketing in the UAB Athletics Department. There, she supervised marketing initiatives for all women's sports. She also previously worked at local public-relations firm O2 Ideas.

Mrs. Wesley and her husband, Rob, live in Homewood with their new puppy, a chocolate lab named Champ.

That's All Gives to Cancer Research

LOCAL greeting card company That's All Greetings was conceived during Debbie Kogan Lyda's treatment for recurrent ovarian cancer at the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center.

During her days-long hospital stays, she and her sister, Karen Kogan Rosenzweig, would joke with the nurses to put a positive spin on a difficult situation by tacking on "that's all" after everything they said. "You have cancer. That's all," Mrs. Rosenzweig says. "For some reason, we found this to be really funny."

Thus, That's All Greetings was born. The business began with simple greeting cards—white cards, black writing and teal envelopes to represent ovarian cancer ribbons—with their trademark short, simple messages. The business now offers shirts and accessories. A portion of all proceeds go directly to the Debbie Kogan Lyda Ovarian Cancer "Road to Recovery" Research Fund at the Cancer Center. For more information, visit www.thatsallgreetings.com.



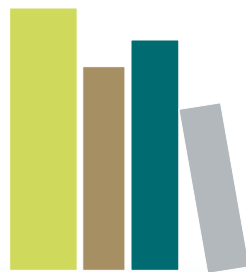
shelf SPACE

CHECK OUT WHAT'S NEW AT THE KIRKLIN CLINIC® PATIENT RESOURCE LIBRARY

Healthier Eating and Living with Cancer, by Karen Jung, with menu suggestions and snack ideas during and after cancer treatments and lots of great recipes

Healthy Eating during Chemotherapy, by Jose van Mil with Christine Archer-Mackenzie. A chef and doctor give tips for eating and drinking during chemotherapy treatments as well as numerous recipes.

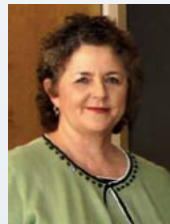
A Cup of Comfort for Breast Cancer Survivors: Inspiring Stories of Courage and Triumph, edited by Colleen Sell with a foreword by Susan G. Komen for the Cure. Fifty breast cancer survivors share their unique, courageous stories.



The Patient Resource Library is located on the second floor of The Kirklin Clinic® and is open Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. You can contact the library at (205) 502-9956 or tkcprl@ccc.uab.edu.

CANCER CENTER DIRECTORS

In its entire 40-year history, the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center has had only three permanent directors, an accomplishment no other center can claim. In February 2011, the center unveiled a commemorative portrait of the directors to recognize their leadership and achievements in the field of cancer. Working alongside each director from the beginning has been Joan Kemp, director of operations for the Cancer Center.



UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center asked Mrs. Kemp to share her thoughts on each of the three men.



On John Durant, M.D. Founding Director, 1968-1982



I began working for Dr. Durant in September 1969, just 14 months after he arrived at UAB from Temple University, and I was his fifth assistant during that time. He was recruited to build the Cancer Center during a difficult time in our state. It's hard to understand the challenges he overcame to have the Cancer Center become one of the first eight National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive centers, but I was there to witness it firsthand. He had the most difficult task of all because he didn't have a blueprint to follow. Dr. Durant was a visionary. While I was always in "the current day," Dr. Durant was 20 years in the future.

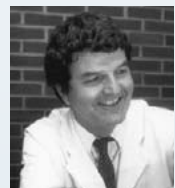
On Albert LoBuglio, M.D. Director, 1983-2004



Dr. LoBuglio had a very practical, common-sense, hands-on style. He can do more with a yellow pad and no. 2 pencil than any individual on earth. During his tenure as director, he did not have a computer on his desk. The staff would jokingly refer to the pencil and paper as his "hard drive" and his brain as his "software." He put the Cancer Center on the map as being one of the premier centers in the country for translational research. Once, during a faculty meeting, someone stated that a potential cost would

be about \$23.75 million to the 17th power. Dr. LoBuglio raised his eyebrows and began writing numbers in the air with his fingers and announced the total. Others challenged him, saying he could not have done that in his head, so they pulled out their calculators and ran the numbers. Amazingly, they had to admit that he was correct. Everyone in the room was dumbfounded—except, of course, for me and Dr. LoBuglio.

On Edward Partridge, M.D. Director, 2007-Present



Dr. Partridge is a true Southern gentleman and consummate leader who has spent the last 20 years of his life building the community infrastructure to make sure that every individual in our region, no matter their socioeconomic status, has access to quality medical care and screening. I can't even imagine what he had to deal with and endure in accomplishing some of these partnerships. Dr. Partridge's door is always open. He is one of the kindest, most generous individuals I have ever known. When you have his attention, you have his undivided attention. He is also one of the most selfless leaders I have ever known, and his passion for helping others is amazing. Although he has been the permanent director for only four years, the progress that he has made in bringing the Cancer Center to the next level is really quite remarkable.

Invest in Our Future

More than 200,000 Americans will be diagnosed with some form of gastrointestinal cancer this year.

The UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center's Gastrointestinal Oncology Research and Patient Care Initiative is an effort to bring together the resources needed to create a nationally prominent research and patient care enterprise in GI oncology at UAB. By developing new treatments, moving these discoveries into the patient care setting quickly and efficiently and reducing the number of deaths caused by GI cancers through prevention and education, UAB has the opportunity to move to the forefront in addressing this serious regional and national health issue.

The Cancer Center has set a goal to raise \$5.5 million from philanthropic sources to take its GI oncology program to the next level. The first phase of this effort is to raise \$1.5 million for an endowed chair in memory of Jim Hayes, a longtime friend and supporter of the center who lost his battle with colon cancer in 2008. Mr. Hayes was a strong believer in the work of the Cancer Center, and this endowed chair will ensure that his name and legacy will live on in perpetuity.

Help us make a difference in the fight against these deadly cancers. By investing in our future, you're investing in the future of the people of Alabama—and beyond.

For more information, or to make a gift, contact:
Jeannie E. Horton, Director of Development
(205) 934-6326
jhorton@uab.edu



"I have so much confidence in the mission of the [UAB Comprehensive] Cancer Center, knowing that when I make a donation, it will stay here. It is a rare opportunity to invest in excellence — not something that's just striving for excellence. The Cancer Center is already there." — Jim Hayes, 2004