Yale Nurse Honors Her Husband’s Memory

WHILE SUPPORTING DISCOVERY TO CURE

When Lois Ravage-Mass first came to Yale Cancer Center with her husband in 1987, she had no idea how many times her path would cross with the Center over the next 18 years.

Lois’ husband, Stephen Ravage, had been diagnosed with melanoma and they had come to Yale for a cutting edge clinical trial using interferon to treat melanoma in an adjuvant therapy trial; years later, interferon is now used as standard therapy for patients with advanced melanoma. Mr. Ravage later passed away, but his experience at Yale and their introduction to the benefits of clinical research and the hope expressed by his doctors and nurses led Lois to continue her journey at Yale.

In 1990, Lois graduated from Yale School of Nursing (YSN) with her Masters Degree in Nursing and focused her nursing career on care of oncology patients. She later met Norman Mass, a widowed father of two children and married him in 1991. After 12 years of marriage, Norman was diagnosed with mesothelioma, a malignant tumor affecting the lining of the chest. He lost his battle with the disease last May. Lois had joined the Yale Cancer Center Clinical Trial Office at the onset of Norm’s diagnosis with cancer, in June of 2003, and is presently the research nurse for the Gynecology Oncology Group (GOG) studies, supporting patients on clinical trials. “The opportunity to work with so many inspiring and caring clinicians and nurses over the last year has been one of the best distractions from the enormous crisis in my life and eventually my grief,” Lois explained. “To honor his memory and to continue his family’s longstanding relationship with Yale Cancer Center, Lois has focused her attention on the Discovery to Cure program. “Norman was a very forward thinking man, he would not have wanted to be remembered as a victim,” Lois explained. In recognition of this, Lois is writing letters to her friends and family explaining the exciting promise of Discovery to Cure and helping to raise money for the program.

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Yale Cancer Center Commemorates 30 Years

AS A NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER

Chosen by the National Cancer Institute as one of its founding comprehensive cancer centers, Yale Cancer Center is celebrating the thirty year milestone with exciting transformations in patient care and cancer research.

Dr. Richard L. Edelson, Director of Yale Cancer Center, said, "We are now in the midst of an unprecedented and extraordinarily exciting growth phase for Yale Cancer Center. Building on the firm foundation created by my predecessors, Drs. Alan Sartorelli and Vincent DeVita, and with substantial support from Yale School of Medicine, Yale-New Haven Hospital, and our colleagues, the NCI-designated comprehensive cancer centers are leaders in developing and implementing new approaches to cancer prevention and cancer care, conducting cutting edge research, and educating our state and region about cancer."

30th anniversary year of Yale Cancer Center has been marked by major accomplishments. In collaboration with Yale School of Medicine and Yale-New Haven Hospital, preparations for a new, 14 story, $430 million cancer center have been announced; the size of the oncology faculty has been doubled through recruitment of renowned oncologists to Yale; and the clinical research program has been expanded."

Resulting from the National Cancer Act of 1971, which gave the National Cancer Institute (NCI) the funding and authority to make the "conquest of cancer a national crusade," a National Cancer Program was initiated, creating a nationwide network of NCI-designated cancer centers. Yale Cancer Center was named a comprehensive cancer center in 1974 and continues to share this federal designation with only 38 other comprehensive cancer centers in the nation.

Yale is the only NCI-designated comprehensive cancer center in southern New England. NCI-designated comprehensive cancer centers are leaders in developing and implementing new approaches to cancer prevention and cancer care, conducting cutting edge research, and educating the State and region about cancer.

The roots of the clinical tradition in cancer diagnosis and treatment are deeply embedded at Yale Medical Center, with the institution having established the coun-

Yale Cancer Center Research Team

BENEFITS FROM TOBACCO MASTER SETTLEMENT FUNDS

Researchers at Yale Cancer Center working on an innovative treatment for Non-small Cell Lung Cancer have received one of two grants from the Connecticut Department of Public Health. Resulting from the nationwide Tobacco Master Settlement Funds, the state funding was allocated for biomedical research projects in the fields of heart disease, cancer, and other tobacco-related illnesses.

The proposed project will establish a phase I clinical trial using a combination of Transimmunization and external beam radiation therapy for the treatment of stage IV and IIIB Non-small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC). Transimmunization is a form of cancer immunotherapy that includes an overnight co-incubation period, which has been found to more efficiently induce malignant T cell death using antigen presenting dendritic cells. These dendritic cells are capable of stimulating anti-cancer immune responses when reintroduced to the patient.

Lynn Wilson, MD, MPH, Associate Professor and Clinical Director, Department of Therapeutic Radiology, is the principal investigator for the phase I trial. “The award from the Connecticut Department of Public Health for this novel clinical trial will provide the opportunity to rapidly investigate the safety of a new modality in patients with NSCLC. Transimmunization was developed at Yale and we are on the leading edge of this type of investigation,” Dr. Wilson said.

Currently the treatment for NSCLC is relatively ineffective; fewer than 15% of patients diagnosed with NSCLC are cured. While many patients receive second- and third-line chemotherapy treatment for NSCLC, the number that substantially benefit is low. The American Cancer Society estimates that 2,000 new cases of lung cancer will be diagnosed in Connecticut this year and that 1,850 men and women will die of lung cancer; it is the leading cause of death from cancer in Connecticut.

This phase I safety evaluation study will be the first step toward learning more about the effects of Transimmunization in combination with radiation therapy and offers a unique immunotherapy based approach for lung cancer patients with advanced disease who meet enrollment criteria,” Dr. Wilson explained.
Staff Briefs

H. Kim Bottomly, PhD has been named Deputy Provost for Science, Technology, and Faculty Development at Yale University.

Meagan Johanson has joined the section of Medical Oncology as an administrative assistant supporting the Genitourinary and Head and Neck Disease Units.

Yale School of Medicine Dean, Robert J. Alpern, MD, has appointed David J. Leffell, MD Deputy Dean for Clinical Affairs. Dr. Leffell is responsible for the growth and development of the school’s clinical practice.

Linda Rink, RN has been named the Associate Director of the Clinical Trials Office at Yale Cancer Center and Director of Research Nursing.

Dotty Saccavino has joined the section of Medical Oncology as an administrative assistant to Dr. Francine Foss.

Lynn Wilson, MD, MPH has been named the Clinical Director and Vice-Chairman of the Department of Therapeutic Radiology.

Raymond Yesner, MD, Professor Emeritus, Department of Pathology, has been awarded the Gold Medal of the United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology. Yesner is an authority of the pathology of the lung and recently completed a comprehensive atlas of lung pathology.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

try’s first university-based Medical Oncology section in the early 1960s. Currently, oncologists at Yale Cancer Center care for patients during more than 25,000 appointments each year. They provide the highest level of care while promoting the discovery and development of new therapies through clinical trials.

Over fifty years ago, the faculty at Yale School of Medicine pioneered modern concepts of chemotherapy, including the first widely used chemotherapeutic agent, nitrogen mustard. Today, scientists and clinicians at Yale Cancer Center collaborate to introduce the latest cancer treatments and combination therapy to patients through Phase I, II, and III clinical trials. The national network provided by the National Cancer Institute enables comprehensive centers, like Yale, to develop the science that translates to innovative cancer therapies for cancer patients.

“Current efforts to complete a new clinical cancer center facility by 2008 will enable Yale Cancer Center to seamlessly integrate interdisciplinary outpatient and inpatient units with advanced clinical trials, stem cell transplantation, radiotherapy, diagnostic imaging, molecular diagnostic and laboratory medicine facilities. This world-class facility will support our focus on translational research as we look ahead to celebrating future anniversaries as a leader in cancer care,” Dr. Edelson said.

Lymphoma Expert, Dr. Francine Foss

Yale Cancer Center Director, Richard L. Edelson, MD, has announced the appointment of Dr. Francine Foss, Professor of Medicine and Dermatology, at Yale Cancer Center. Dr. Foss is an internationally recognized clinician and clinical researcher with expertise in adult lymphomas and in stem cell allotransplantation.

“Dr. Foss is an excellent example of an active clinical and translational investigator, having derived and tested therapies that have been used to treat thousands of cancer patients. Her recent research has potential to substantially impact the field of stem cell allotransplantation, bringing significant benefit to cancer patients at Yale and throughout the world. Her addition to our already very strong T Cell Lymphoma and Stem Cell Transplantation teams will enhance our international prominence in these clinical areas,” Dr. Edelson said.

Dr. Foss has designed, initiated, and directed multi-center national clinical trials of two pharmacologic agents for lymphoma and myelodysplastic syndromes, bringing significant benefit to cancer patients at Yale and throughout the world.

Currently the Director of the Lymphoma and Experimental Therapeutics and leader of the Graft-vs-Host and Transplant Immunology Group at Tufts New England Medical Center in Boston, Dr. Foss will bring a nationally established clinical trials program to Yale Cancer Center. She has designed, initiated, and directed multi-center national clinical trials of two pharmacologic agents for lymphoma, which have subsequently received FDA approval and are widely used treatments. One of these, Interleukin-2 conjugated to Diphtheria toxin, was the first FDA approved fusion biologic drug to be approved for use in the United States.

Dr. Foss’ recent clinical research in the field of stem cell transplantation has received national acclaim. With the introduction of intravenous infusions of autologous immature dendritic cells before an allogeneic bone marrow transplant, Foss has reduced the development of graft-versus-host disease in patients from the average of 40-50 percent to only 15 percent. These findings, initially documented through a study of 104 lymphoma patients in her care, have led to the initiation of two NCI-sponsored trials to confirm these results in patients with lymphoma and myelodysplastic syndrome undergoing allogeneic bone marrow transplant.

For this important advance, Dr. Foss’s group received the George Santos Award from the American Society of Bone Marrow Transplantation in 2004.

A graduate of Dartmouth College, Dr. Foss received her Medical Degree from the University of Massachusetts Medical School. She completed her internship and residency training in Internal Medicine at Brigham and Women’s Hospital before joining the National Cancer Institute, where she completed a fellowship in Medical Oncology and served as a Senior Investigator and Chairman of the T Cell Lymphoma Program.

Dr. Foss chaired the plenary session on T Cell Lymphoma at the last two International Meetings on Lymphoma and has been an invited speaker at over 40 national and international conferences and annual meetings over the last three years. In addition to her authorship of numerous original articles, reviews, or book chapters, Dr. Foss serves on the editorial board of the journal, Clinical Lymphoma.
Melanoma Disease Unit

The strong collaboration between clinicians caring for patients with melanoma and basic science researchers investigating new treatments at Yale Cancer Center is creating the potential for developing new clinical therapies for melanoma. Led by Dr. Stephan Aryan, a Clinical Professor of Plastic Surgery at Yale School of Medicine and Dr. Mario Sznol, Vice-Chief of Medical Oncology and a medical oncologist specializing in melanoma, members of the Melanoma Disease Unit have combined their strengths to benefit the patients at Yale Cancer Center.

The multidisciplinary team has allowed us to tap into the existing scientific resources at Yale Cancer Center and create a program that will advance important research findings into the clinic.

“The multidisciplinary team has allowed us to tap into the existing scientific resources at Yale Cancer Center and create a program that will advance important research findings into the clinic,” explained Dr. Sznol, who joined Yale Cancer Center last summer.

Dr. Ruth Halaban, a senior research scientist in the Department of Dermatology and a member of the Melanoma Disease Unit, has been investigating the characteristics of melanoma cells for over thirty years. Currently she is focusing on preclinical laboratory studies investigating combinations of agents and novel drugs for the treatment of melanoma. Current chemotherapy and immunotherapy treatments for melanomas are minimally effective; standard treatment produces marginal benefit and does not improve median survival.

A common therapy for metastatic melanoma, Interferon-alpha is modestly successful in curing about 15% of patients. Dr. Halaban, in conjunction with Dr. Sznol and Dr. Harriet Kluger, Assistant Professor of Medicine, is seeking to determine why the treatment is effective for some patients and not for others. Her focus is twofold: to identify genes that carry out or disrupt Interferon’s anti-cancer effects and to find treatments that make cancer cells more responsive to Interferon.

Using tissue samples obtained following surgery for melanoma, Drs. Halaban and Kluger are able to study the various molecular characteristics of patients’ tumors using tissue microarrays and to correlate these characteristics to patient outcome. Under the direction of Dr. David Rimm, the tissue microarray shared resource at Yale Cancer Center enables researchers to analyze several hundred tissue samples within a single paraffin block, providing highly efficient evaluation and assessment of the samples. Their partnership with Dr. Aryan has been a key component to the creation of an extensive collection of melanoma tissue samples for study. The ability to review pre- and post-treatment tissue samples will help in the identification of DNA changes that interfere with the success of Interferon. “Our hope is to be able to identify patients who will respond to Interferon before the treatment has begun,” Dr. Halaban explained.

In addition, previous studies continue on page 4
Yale Celebrates Cancer Survivors Day

Over 150 cancer survivors and their families joined their physicians, nurses, and the staff of Yale Cancer Center for a day of workshops and a picnic on May 26th in celebration of Cancer Survivors Day. The event, titled New Beginnings: Complementary Approaches to Living Well Today, invited guests to attend one of three workshops: Hand and Foot Reflexology, Healthy Foods, or Life After Cancer Care.

Attending his eighth Cancer Survivors Day at Yale Cancer Center as Master of Ceremonies, Dr. Mel Goldstein, meteorologist on WTNH News Channel 8, hosted the guests at a picnic luncheon following the workshops.

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Frank C. Detterbeck, MD

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR CLINICAL AFFAIRS

Yale Cancer Center, Yale-New Haven Hospital, and the Yale Medical Group have jointly appointed Dr. Frank C. Detterbeck, Professor of Surgery, to the position of Associate Director for Clinical Affairs. In this position, Dr. Detterbeck will be responsible for the coordination of the day-to-day clinical activities of all of the oncology-related departments and services at Yale Cancer Center and will serve as the liaison between the administration of Yale-New Haven Hospital, the Yale University School of Medicine, and the medical staff.

Dr. Detterbeck brings the essential combination of experience as a leader in multidisciplinary cancer care and a nationally recognized thoracic surgeon to the critical new position of Associate Director for Clinical Affairs.

“Dr. Detterbeck brings the essential combination of experience as a leader in multidisciplinary cancer care and a nationally recognized thoracic surgeon to the critical new position of Associate Director for Clinical Affairs. As we enter an intensive phase of planning for the future of cancer care at Yale Cancer Center, Dr. Detterbeck’s leadership and knowledge of multidisciplinary care will be integral to our success,” Dr. Richard L. Edelson, Director of Yale Cancer Center, said.

“By overseeing the multidisciplinary approach to care, Dr. Detterbeck will help advance our goal of excellence in the care of cancer patients,” noted Dr. David J. Leffell, Deputy Dean for Clinical Affairs of the Yale School of Medicine and Director of the Yale Medical Group.

In addition to his position of Associate Director for Clinical Affairs, Dr. Detterbeck was named Chief of the Section of Thoracic Surgery, and Surgical Director of Thoracic Oncology in the Department of Surgery and at Yale-New Haven Hospital. “Dr. Detterbeck is nationally and internationally recognized as one of the premiere thoracic surgical oncologists who delivers state-of-the-art care with compassion and skill,” said Robert Udelsman, MD, MBA, Lampman Professor of Surgery and Chairman of the Department of Surgery.

Before coming to Yale, Dr. Detterbeck practiced at the University of North Carolina (UNC) since 1992; he was named Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery at UNC in 2004. His major clinical interest is in thoracic oncology and he has focused his research on evidence-based medicine, improvements in outcomes for patients with lung cancer, and multidisciplinary care programs. While at UNC, he founded the Multidisciplinary Thoracic Oncology Program (MTOP), which has received national recognition as a model for cancer programs because of the efficient and streamlined care of patients and excellent clinical results.

He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and his Doctor of Medicine degree from Northwestern University in 1983. Dr. Detterbeck completed his Residency in General Surgery at the Virginia Mason Clinic in Seattle before joining the University of North Carolina in 1988 to complete a Residency in Cardiothoracic Surgery and a Fellowship in Thoracic Transplantation.

Dr. Detterbeck is the editor of a major textbook on Lung Cancer, The Diagnosis and Treatment of Lung Cancer: An Evidence-Based Guide for the Practicing Clinician. Dr. Detterbeck has also published over 100 original articles, chapters, and reviews, averaging over one new publication per month since 2000. He is listed in Who’s Who in America, 2005, in the America’s Top Doctors for Cancer guide by Castle Connely, 2005, and in the Guide to America’s Top Physicians, Consumers’ Research Council of America, 2003. He is chair of the Thoracic Oncology Network and serves on the steering committee for the Guidelines in Lung Cancer of the American College of Chest Physicians.

Dr. Detterbeck can be reached via email at frank.detterbeck@yale.edu.
Yale Cancer Center’s sixth annual gala, *La Cassa Magica*, was held on Saturday, April 16th at the Country Club of Fairfield. Raising $420,000 to support the development of translational research and the initiation of clinical trials at Yale Cancer Center, the evening celebrated advances made in targeted treatments aimed at eradicating cancer.

The Honorable Rudolph W. and Mrs. Judith Giuliani were the honorary chairs for the evening, which was hosted by CNN television news anchor and Yale Cancer Center Board member Paula Zahn. Kathryn Anderson Adams of Greenwich chaired the event. Dr. and Mrs. Richard Sackler were Vice Chairs and Louis Chenevert, Paul Kelly, Nicholas Makes, and Joseph Perella served as Corporate Chairs.


Former Mayor Giuliani was welcomed by a surprise performance of his two favorite arias, Puccini’s *Vissi d’Arte* and *Un bel di* performed by Metropolitan Opera star, Anya Fidelia, accompanied by Carrie Ann Matheson. He spoke movingly about his realization that he had been diagnosed with prostate cancer and how it has changed his life.

In support of *La Cassa Magica* and Yale Cancer Center, Fauchon donated favors for each of the guests. Sony Music Entertainment provided CD gift sets and Tiffany & Co. of Westport graciously donated special gifts.

The evening concluded with a sparkling performance of *Singing Astaire: A Fred Astaire Songbook*, a revue of music written for Fred Astaire from Birdland in New York City.