

# friends

NEWS FROM THE COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER OF WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY



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Comprehensive Cancer Center of  
Wake Forest University

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## New Mary Kirkpatrick Professorship for Breast Cancer Research

Just as there are defining moments in individual lives—those events that inspire or challenge us to reach new horizons—so are there defining moments in private philanthropy. Such moments bring together the generosity of a donor with the strategic needs of the recipient in a way that promises to transform work in progress or allow new ground to be broken.

The Comprehensive Cancer Center of Wake Forest University experienced one of those transformational moments this August when Mary Kirkpatrick of Beckley, WV, donated more than one million dollars to establish a new endowed Professorship for Breast Cancer Research. Mrs. Kirkpatrick is a cancer survivor and recognizes the critical importance of the ground-breaking work under way in Wake Forest's Breast Cancer Center of Excellence.

"Mrs. Kirkpatrick knows firsthand our commitment to overcoming breast cancer and the devastating impact it has on the lives of women and their families," said Frank M. Torti, M.D., M.P.H., Director of the Comprehensive Cancer Center and Charles L. Spurr Professor of Medicine.

"Her gift allows us to apply more resources, specifically in the recruitment of another nationally-eminent researcher in this field who can continue the effort to prevent the breast cancer, diagnose it at the earliest possible moment for effective interventions, and develop more effective treatments.

"As a way to honor Mrs. Kirkpatrick's dedication and generosity," added Dr. Torti, "the cancer leader recruited for this position will be known as the Mary Kirkpatrick Professor for Breast Cancer Research."

Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in women. In 2007, more than 240,000 will be diagnosed, including more than 178,000 new cases of invasive breast cancer. The risk of invasive cancer for all women is one in eight over a lifetime. More than 40,000 women will die of breast cancer in 2007 in the U.S.

The good news is that breast cancer survival rates continue to increase. Five-year survival for localized breast cancer has increased from 80 to 98 percent, and the five-year survival rate for regionalized breast cancer is 83 percent, according to the American Cancer Society. These advances can be linked directly to the discovery of new knowledge through laboratory research and clinical trials—the kind of work that is the daily mission of physicians and scientists at the Comprehensive Cancer Center of Wake Forest University.



Mary Kirkpatrick

"It is very gratifying to participate in the connection of a generous and highly motivated donor like Mrs. Kirkpatrick and beneficiaries like the knowledgeable and skilled faculty and staff at the Cancer Center," said Kyle Hanser, Director of Development. "It is through the insight, commitment, and generosity of donors like Mrs. Kirkpatrick and her husband, Harry Kirkpatrick, Jr., that our Cancer Center will continue to enhance its reputation as one of the best in the nation."

## Director's Message

This issue of *Friends* is another installment about why "**Knowledge Makes All the Difference.**"

First, we want to say 'thank you' to Mary Kirkpatrick of Beckley, WV, for endowing the Mary Kirkpatrick Professorship for Breast Cancer Research. This is visionary philanthropy. This transformational gift will allow us not only to keep pace, but to be pacesetters for the discovery of more effective treatments and, ultimately, a cure for breast cancer.

When we put all the gifts together (see the Fiscal Year 2007 Honor Roll of Donors inside) then we see the scope of concern, interest and commitment by people willing to support efforts that translate into progress against cancer of all types.

The Kirkpatrick gift benefits the Breast Cancer Center of Excellence. Steven Akman, M.D., Director of the Center, emphasizes in the article on page 7 the importance of diagnosis and treatment within an academic center. He notes a scholarly study that shows that Centers like ours often help patients avoid unnecessary treatment as well as give them access to the best treatment. The concentration of experts in all of the various facets related to diagnosis and treatment, and their collective focus on the patient, is how "**Knowledge Makes All the Difference**" at a Center like ours.

Another article in this issue, about a leukemia clinical trial on page 3, documents not only impressive progress against leukemia, it illustrates why clinical trials are so vital to patients—because this is one of the primary ways we gain new knowledge. Many of these clinical trials in the United States result from the partnership between funding sources like the National

Institutes of Health and academic centers like Wake Forest that have the physicians, clinical facilities, and support with computer databases and other technology to generate massive amounts of information and translate it into knowledge that benefits our patients.



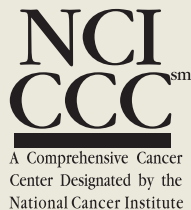
Frank M. Torti, M.D., M.P.H.

What we do is bring all of the necessary resources—physicians, scientists, technology, treatment plans—together in such a way that "**Knowledge Makes All the Difference.**" And that is one reason benefactors like Mary Kirkpatrick are motivated to partner with us. They know that, like the study cited in *Good Housekeeping* (see page 7) says, all too often the guarantee for first-rate care involves a second opinion at an academic cancer center.

We work hard to earn your support. Thank you for joining us. Together, I know we can make a difference.

Sincerely,

Frank M. Torti, M.D., M.P.H.



The **Comprehensive Cancer Center of Wake Forest University** is proud to be one of only 39 Comprehensive Cancer Centers in the nation designated by the National Cancer Institute for excellence and national leadership in cancer research, patient care and education.

For patients, the coveted NCI designation means the assurance of receiving the most advanced cancer treatments available, including access to innovative drug, immunologic and biologic therapies through hundreds of clinical trials. Wake Forest's multidisciplinary approach is complemented by one of the nation's first and most successful Cancer Patient Support Programs. **When it comes to cancer, knowledge makes all the difference.**

# National Leukemia Trial Yields Positive Result

Karen Shelton, a nurse from Kannapolis, NC, was diagnosed with Acute Promyelocytic Leukemia (APL) in 2001. APL is a cancer of the bone marrow. Six years later she is a witness to the important role clinical trials play in the ongoing quest to find more effective therapies to fight all types of cancer.

Bayard Powell, M.D., professor and section head of Hematology and Oncology at the Comprehensive Cancer Center of Wake Forest University, served as principal investigator for the nationwide Phase III study involving 582 patients in the U.S. and Canada. This summer, at the Plenary Session of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, Dr. Powell presented the clinical study's positive survival data for APL patients receiving standard chemotherapy supplemented with arsenic trioxide (marketed as Trisenox®).

"Patients receiving the arsenic trioxide had a significantly higher likelihood of disease-free survival and overall survival than those on standard chemotherapy alone," said Powell. "The results were so compelling that we now recommend the use of arsenic trioxide in the first-line treatment of APL."

Karen Shelton was a participant in this clinical research trial, which incorporated arsenic trioxide as part of early treatment for patients with untreated APL. Arsenic trioxide is currently approved by the Food and Drug Administration for patients who do not respond to, or relapse following, standard first-line therapy, but not as part of first-line therapy.

"I believe chemotherapy put me in remission, but the arsenic trioxide therapy sealed the deal," Shelton said when the results were announced.

The study, conducted from June 1999 to March 2005, was sponsored by the National Cancer Institute (NCI). The NCI is the agency of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) that bestows the highly coveted *Comprehensive* designation to the nation's leading cancer centers, of which the Comprehensive Cancer Center of Wake Forest University is one of just 39.

**Dr. Bayard Powell with patient Mr. Andrew Wolfe. Powell presented the national findings for the leukemia trial to the American Society for Clinical Oncology earlier this fall.**

Patients receiving the arsenic trioxide had a significantly higher likelihood of disease-free survival and overall survival than those on standard chemotherapy alone.

Approximately 81 percent of patients with APL who received the arsenic trioxide were alive and remained in remission (free of disease) three years after diagnosis compared to 66 percent of patients treated with the previously recommended standard chemotherapy regimen.

"The importance of clinical trials will continue to increase," said Powell, "as the NIH begins the implementation of its new national emphasis on translational medicine—bringing better treatments to patients in a timelier manner."



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————— *Thank You For Your Support* —————

# Comprehensive Cancer Centers Are Best Option for Precision Care

Academic medical centers are rightfully touted as the places to go for the most advanced care. One thing they are not often credited for is the ability of their experts to help some patients avoid unnecessary treatment.

Steven Akman, M.D., Director of the Breast Cancer Center of Excellence, agrees with a University of Michigan study noted in the May 2007 issue of *Good Housekeeping* magazine, "First, Get a Second Opinion." The article notes that more than half the women in the study diagnosed with breast cancer had a change in their treatment plans after consulting with a multi-disciplinary team of specialists at a cancer center.

Akman emphasizes that the pace of knowledge and discovery, and the exchange of that information from the experts in one type of cancer to another, is what makes the value of "first, get a second opinion" so important.

"The key thing is that management of breast cancer has been evolving so fast," said Akman. "The reason to seek diagnostic and treatment expertise at a major cancer center is because the newest and most effective treatments originate here through clinical trials, technological innovation, and basic research."

Some examples of the crossover of knowledge in cancer diagnosis and treatment include:

- Sentinel lymph node evaluation started with malignant melanoma patients and is now used in breast cancer and gynecological cancers, among others.
- The potential role of dietary elements, such as vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids in the prevention and treatment of prostate cancer, have been extended to breast cancer.
- One of the major areas of research is the discovery of gene-environment interactions to identify women at the highest risk for breast cancer.

The comprehensive nature of care within an academic setting also is present in the translation of research in quality of life concerns such as identifying how exercise may benefit breast cancer survivors.

An illustration of how academic medicine pushes the envelope for cancer patients is in the research and clinical trials that constantly seek to extend both the length and the quality of survivorship.

"New clinical trials have shown that longer periods of treatment with newer therapies extend the period we call disease-free survival," Akman said. "Academic centers like ours are where the disease continuously gets pushed to the limit."

For more information, or to request an appointment, call the Breast Care Center at (336) 713-3574.

**Dr. Steven Akman, Director of the Breast Cancer Center of Excellence, says the newest and most effective treatments originate at major cancer centers.**



## Academic Partnerships Are Good for Patients, Too

One of the distinguishing characteristics of American education is the idea that the diffusion of knowledge is advantageous and serves the greater good.

One way academic medical centers contribute to the body of knowledge about illness and health is to publish research findings for others to learn from and build upon. Another way is to enter into collaborative agreements like the one between the Comprehensive Cancer Center of Wake Forest University and the cancer center at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC).

The result of this exchange of ideas is often an idea for a new clinical research study. The joint venture with MUSC started over two years ago and recently funded two pilot grants to foster education and prevention in smoking. Lung cancer is the second most common cancer and the most common cause of cancer-related death in men and women in the U.S. In 2007, the National Cancer Institute estimates 213,380 new cases of lung

The joint venture with MUSC started over two years ago and recently funded two pilot grants to foster education and prevention in smoking.

cancer and more than 160,300 deaths. Approximately \$9.6 billion is spent annually in the U.S. to treat lung cancer.

"This kind of partnership first and foremost benefits our patients," said Frank Torti, M.D., M.P.H., Director of the Comprehensive Cancer Center of Wake Forest University. "But it also benefits the physicians and scientists at the respective centers because it broadens their access to information and gives them a wider reach for their work."

"The ultimate goal", says Torti, "is to begin new projects with collaborative partners like MUSC that target each of the hundreds of types of cancer."

## How You Can Help

The Comprehensive Cancer Center of Wake Forest University is dedicated to the discovery of new and effective treatments for a variety of cancers. A vital part of the support for this work comes from former patients, families and friends who know firsthand its importance.

For information about how to support the Cancer Center with a gift, contact Kyle Hanser, Director of Development, (336) 716-4589 or [khanser@wfubmc.edu](mailto:khanser@wfubmc.edu).

For more information about the Comprehensive Cancer Center, contact Rebecca Rankin, Director of Administration, (336) 716-5689 or [rrankin@wfubmc.edu](mailto:rrankin@wfubmc.edu).

Thank you.

### Mail contributions to:

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## Be our guest for free at SciWorks on December 8th!

**"Check Your Insides Out"** —an interactive exhibit at SciWorks that teaches about the prevention, detection, and treatment of cancer. Hands-on learning stations feature information about cancer affecting various parts of the body—from the skin on the outside to the intestines on the inside.

The Comprehensive Cancer Center of Wake Forest University is a sponsor for the exhibit and invites families from the community to attend FREE Saturday, December 8th, from 11 am to 5 pm.

Hands-on learning stations feature information about cancer affecting various parts of the body—from the skin on the outside to the intestines on the inside.

Representatives from our Comprehensive Cancer Center and Best Health will be on hand during the day to do free health screenings, share information about clinical trials and provide interactive games for children related to nutrition, as well as many other activities.

**"Check Your Insides Out"** is produced by the Prevent Cancer Foundation.

For more information contact: SciWorks Science Center, 400 W. Hanes Mill Road, Winston-Salem, 336-714-7109.



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