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Philanthropy in Action at UVA Cancer Center

INVESTING IN HOPE

INVESTING IN HOPE

continued from front cover

Nine years later Bill returned to UVA to discuss complications he was experiencing when he received a diagnosis that required immediate medical intervention—he had colon cancer.

“Even though I live in Richmond, it never crossed my mind to go anywhere but UVA for my treatment,” Bill says. “The doctors are the best.”

Now he travels to UVA Cancer Center Pantops, where Bill has been inspired by the relationship he has formed with Dr. Matthew Reilley.

“He has the right manner, the right knowledge, and he talks about moving forward,” Bill says. “I don’t think I would have lived these last nine months if Dr. Reilley hadn’t really worked hard to find the right therapies to stave off this cancer for me.”

Dr. Reilley, who specializes in making immunotherapies more effective in the treatment of gastrointestinal cancers, said he was drawn to the field of oncology because of the relationships and trust that develop with his patients.

“It feels good to know that I spent all these years training for a reason, and that is so I can help people like Bill,” Dr. Reilley says. “We have a bond now.”

In addition to UVA Medical Center and the Couric building, patients are now

also receiving care at regional locations in Culpeper, Augusta, and Charlottesville at Pantops.

“From the patient perspective, the community oncology centers can be more accessible and convenient,” Dr. Reilley says. “From a doctor’s perspective, this model of delivery helps in the pursuit of medicine because certain patients benefit from being in certain locations.”

Dr. Reilley, too, feels grateful to practice medicine in an environment that fosters both personal connections and innovative research.

“My primary interest in doing research is to make things work for patients, and to translate the most promising therapies into treatments that help patients and make a difference in their lives,” Dr. Reilley says.

Neither Bill nor Dr. Reilley know how this treatment will ultimately play out, but they do know that they are in it together.

“There is a long-term relationship here, and a lot of trust,” Bill says. “He trusts that I’m doing everything I can on my end, and I trust that he is doing everything on his end.”

“I can’t let Dr. Reilley down because he’s done all this research for me, he’s developed new protocols, and the nurses and researchers and staff are all really wonderful people,” Bill says. “It’s a great big picture, and I like to think that I’m part of the team.”

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Community Oncology Extends Care, Hope Throughout Region

For years Bill Gregory's job was to ensure that hospitals operated effectively. The emergency room, the parking garage, the cancer unit, the cafeteria—each day he thought of his hospitals as holistic systems with a patient at the center.

Now years after his retirement from a career in hospital administration, roles have reversed. Today, a comprehensive team of doctors, nurses, and researchers at the new UVA Cancer Center Pantops are working hard to ensure that Bill receives the best possible treatment for his recent colon cancer diagnosis.

“They’re a second family for me now, and I look forward to seeing them every two weeks,” Bill says. “I go home feeling good, which doesn’t happen in a high percentage of healthcare facilities—I know from experience.”

The last nine months of Bill’s care mark the second major contribution that UVA has made to his quality of life. A native of Richmond, VA, Bill first sought care at UVA in 2008 to address chest pain and breathing difficulty.

What he learned next would change the course of his life forever—Bill needed a lung transplant. It was a long road to recovery, and Bill was a model patient determined to regain his independence. He became a fixture in Charlottesville, participating in the transplant support group, and visiting medical students to teach them about lung disease and life after receiving a transplant.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

This year marks my fifth anniversary as director of UVA Cancer Center, and I'm as excited today as my first day by the care, energy, and dedication I see daily. Thanks to our incredible teams, we see patients in 90 counties throughout Virginia and West Virginia and serve a population of over four million residents. In our labs, I've witnessed tremendous research advances in the areas of immunotherapy, nanotechnology, and cell signaling. I've seen our community benefit from our expertise in clinical research, with clinical trial enrollment increasing by almost 100%.

Looking ahead, you'll see some physical changes to the Couric building. We're renovating 26,000 square feet on the fourth floor to expand our infusion center and state-of-the-art clinic spaces. Since May 2016, 33 stellar new faculty members have been recruited. Two of the newest faces you'll see are Dr. Michael Engel, division chief

for our pediatric hematology/oncology program, and Dr. Li Li, co-leader of cancer control and population health in UVA Cancer Center.

Beyond our walls, we are expanding our regional outreach with new community oncology practices in Charlottesville at Pantops, Culpeper, and Augusta, offering the UVA care you've come to expect, closer to home. With telemedicine, we are better able to reach underserved areas, including providing screenings for bladder, lung, and breast cancer throughout southwest Virginia.

I'm very proud to be at UVA. Our faculty, nurses, volunteers, and donors have made so much possible, and I can't wait to see what the next five years will bring.

Thank you,
Tom Loughran



UVA Health System Marketing

EYEING THE FUTURE OF CANCER RESEARCH

What will innovative cancer research look like 20, or even 30, years from now? What will immunotherapy or smart chemotherapy teach us in the coming decades, and where will researchers focus their attention from there?

These are the questions that Darla Davies asks, and thanks to a generous gift to UVA Cancer Center, the Albemarle County, VA, native has ensured that future generations of scientists will have the research dollars critical to solving what will be some of the world's pressing public health issues.

Darla said a desire to move medicine forward, paired with personal experience, motivated her to make the gift.

"A thriving research community drives innovation and creativity, and by seeding the most promising new ideas I hope this fund contributes to saving lives," Darla says. A cancer survivor herself, she has also watched family members battle the disease. These experiences affected Darla deeply, but unknown to her then, they were experiences that helped prepare her to overcome a significant health issue of her own.

An award-winning ballroom dancer, Darla suffered from a deteriorating left hip joint that was extremely painful and what some doctors told her would be a career-ending injury.

"I was suffering, I was in a lot of pain, and I made a decision about how I wanted to respond to this challenge," Darla says. "I thought about the cancer survivors I know, and the people I love who lost their battle with cancer. The bravery they exuded everyday fueled me to return to the dancefloor, and to come back stronger than ever."

She chronicles her return to the dance floor following hip replacement surgery in her new memoir, *Who Said I'd Never Dance Again? A Journey From Hip Replacement Surgery to Athletic Victory*, available spring 2019. For more information about Darla and her new memoir, visit: www.mydancinghips.com

Through a \$7.5 million bequest of her estate, Darla, a successful realtor and ballroom dancer, will create the Darla Davies Fund for Cancer Research, an endowment that will support exciting research, with a preference for seed funding the most innovative ideas.

"This is a rare gift for future cancer investigators," says Dr. Tom Loughran, director of UVA Cancer Center. "This bequest will allow researchers to pursue promising ideas that have the potential to impact countless patients' lives."

Courtesy of Darla Davies

A REASON TO ROW

This September, 14 teams of four rowed 567,451 miles and raised almost \$12,000 for UVA Cancer Center.

It started in February 2017, when Sally Bondurant and her husband Svend Pedersen learned that their 27-year-old son, Eric, had testicular cancer. Eric immediately had surgery to remove his testicle. Unfortunately, in the fall of 2017, the cancer was still present even after a round of outpatient chemotherapy. His doctor made the decision to refer him to Dr. Robert Dreicer at UVA Cancer Center. In February 2018, Eric began inpatient chemotherapy treatments at UVA.

"Fighting cancer is a journey for the individual and the family," Sally says. "As a parent, there is a quiet desperation and feeling of powerlessness."

Eight months and four rounds of chemotherapy later, Eric recently received a very positive prognosis from Dr. Dreicer. In gratitude for the care Eric received at UVA, Sally and Svend wanted to give back while at the same time honoring their son's courage and strength.

"Eric was doing his part fighting the disease, doctors and medical staff at UVA were doing their part by treating and healing, and we wanted to do our part too," Sally explains.

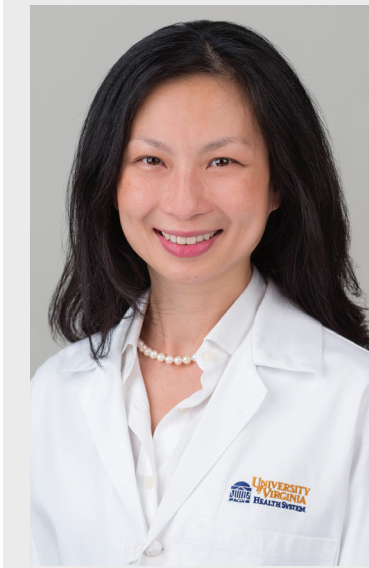


Longtime members of CrossFit Nittany in State College, PA, the couple decided to host a "Row to Fight Cancer" fundraiser. In conjunction, Sally and Svend set up a giving page on the UVA Health Foundation's "Get Involved" platform, which allows supporters to customize online giving pages and direct donations to the cause closest to their hearts.

Sally and Svend decided that UVA should designate how to best use the funds. This kind of support is incredibly valuable because it allows UVA Cancer Center Director Dr. Tom Loughran to meet unforeseen needs or take advantage of new opportunities—whether it is supporting a novel research project or funding creative support services.

Courtesy of Sally Bondurant

Q&A with DR. LAAHN FOSTER



Why did you decide to become a hematologist/oncologist?

I took an indirect path to clinical medicine. I started my career as a management consultant in the healthcare industry. In that role, I often interacted with many physician-thought leaders. Through these relationships, I could see and was motivated to have a more direct impact on human healthcare. So, I changed career paths and decided to become a physician.

I specialized in hematology/oncology for three important reasons. First, I was drawn to practice where there was significant unmet clinical need, and where I could hope to "move the needle" through my own research and clinical efforts. Second, heme/onc was poised to be a priority therapy area with the potential to make great advances for patients. Third, I am the type of person who "lives to work," rather than "works to live." I have a deep respect and love for individual patient care and pushing the research envelope. It inspires me every day.

What is the best part of your work at UVA?

Each patient is our most important patient. It is the highest honor and pleasure to be a part of my patients' lives. The singular objective that we all share at UVA is to provide healthcare at a world-class level, and thus provide every patient with the best possible clinical outcomes. Further, I am blessed to work with incredibly gifted and dedicated colleagues. We have a very strong team ethos of seamless collaboration. Our patients and the critically needed research for future patients come first.

How has or does philanthropy impact your work?

We can only improve patient care with research. Every day, we are engaged in basic science efforts, studies or unique trials we design and lead through UVA. Research, unfortunately, is expensive. But if we are dedicated to the future of human healthcare, we must be dedicated to addressing the financial realities of paying for this research.

We receive some grant funding from the NIH, independent research foundations, and the biopharmaceutical industry. But it is not enough to do the work we need to do for tomorrow's medical successes. Only through the generous donations of philanthropic individuals and organizations can we do the work that has to be done.

One thing most people don't know about you?

I am a simple person. I love my family. I especially love watching my son play tournament golf. But if the truth be told, I adore a well-poured Vesper Martini.

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