

# cancerlines



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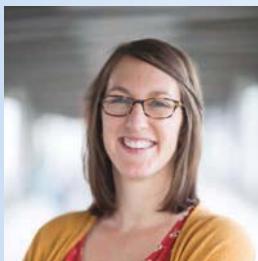
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CANCER CARE

## From Pastor to Patient: Shay Greene

*After years of providing spiritual guidance and counseling to UNC patients, many of whom had cancer, the tables turned on hospital chaplain Shay Greene. On September 16, 2011, she was diagnosed with Stage 3 breast cancer. Following a mastectomy, radiation, chemo and breast reconstruction, Shay says she was changed forever. Here, Shay tells the story of how a pen and paper became the tools that helped her move forward in her own faith and renewed her ministry to others who are going through cancer.*

I'm no stranger to cancer. I've been a hospital chaplain for more than 23 years, and I consider it a privilege to share in the joy and the pain that is often a part of the journey for many cancer patients. In 2009, I saw the disease from the perspective of caregiver when my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and had a mastectomy. My mother lived with me for a month while she recuperated. It was a difficult time for me and my family, so I understand the stress and worry many caregivers face.

In late 2010, I began to date the man of my dreams, Jeff Greene. But in September 2011, just ten months after we started dating, I found a lump in my right breast while taking a shower. I was confused because a month earlier, I went to my annual GYN visit, and I got a clean bill of health. I got a mammogram, which led to diagnostic mammography, which led to a biopsy. On September 16, 2011, I was diagnosed with breast cancer and later found out it was Stage 3. One of my oncologists, Dr. Hy Muss, called it an 'interval cancer,' which is a fast-growing cancer that appears less than 12 months after a negative breast screening.



*My colleagues, including my friend Dr. Don Rosenstein, have been a valuable part of my support system during my cancer journey.*

I worked with my doctors to map out my treatment plan. I went through eight rounds of preoperative chemotherapy before my surgery — once every two weeks for a total of 16 weeks from October 2011 through January 2012. I suffered from 'chemo brain,' blurred vision, hair loss, and exhaustion. I wore a wig when I lost my hair, but eventually, my hair grew back.

I was adamant about maintaining my privacy, so I only shared my condition with my UNC Pastoral Care staff and the Vice President to whom I report, and I swore them to secrecy.

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## Research study could pave way for personalized breast cancer treatment



Researchers from the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center and other academic centers have analyzed hundreds of breast cancer samples to try to pinpoint the genetic causes of invasive lobular carcinoma, the second most commonly diagnosed type of invasive breast cancer.

Through a large, comprehensive genomic analysis published recently in the journal *Cell*, the researchers found that invasive lobular carcinoma should be seen as three different subtypes based on their genetic features. They hope that in the future, the findings could be used to develop trials testing personalized treatment approaches for the disease.

"We revealed that invasive lobular carcinomas are genetically distinct, and that there are biologically defined subgroups of the disease that could have important clinical implications," said the study's senior author Charles M. Perou, PhD, a UNC Lineberger member and the May Goldman Shaw Distinguished Professor of Molecular Oncology. "Lobular cancers are not a single group, but may represent at least three different diseases that appear to differ in their microenvironmental features, and which also show differences in outcomes."

The multi-institution research project was an effort of The Cancer Genome Atlas, a National Cancer Institute and National Human Genome Research Institute-backed effort to create a comprehensive atlas of the genetic changes in cancer. The study involved the analysis of genetic and molecular patterns in more than 800 breast cancer samples — including 127 samples of invasive lobular carcinoma, a disease that's been studied on a limited basis in previous genomic studies, Perou said.

"Now that we have these important new subgroups of invasive lobular carcinoma, we can go in and try to validate some of the findings about differences in outcome,"

*continued on page 3*

# director's message



Ned Sharpless, MD

People frequently joke that a 40th birthday means one is 'over the hill.' I believe that at UNC Lineberger, it means we've only just begun. This year we celebrate 40 years

of providing the best and most compassionate care to those diagnosed with cancer, as well as offering the latest in cancer prevention and care initiatives to the citizens of North Carolina. From the laboratory to the bedside to the community, we've built a reputation for developing new tools and technologies to unlock the complex cancer puzzle and bring us closer to making all types of cancer curable.

We are also celebrating the generosity of Lineberger Board of Visitors members Ken and Cheryl Williams of Burlington, N.C., who recently made what I consider

to be a transformational \$10 million commitment to our cancer center. Their gift will allow us to make timely investments in emerging, high-impact areas of cancer research; it could literally change the course of cancer-fighting history.

The celebration continues with the news that UNC Lineberger has been awarded an "exceptional" rating by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) for our cancer center's grant renewal application, which is part of our five-year institutional review and renewal of our core grant. We earned one of the top scores ever given to any cancer center since NCI began rigorously rating them. This truly reflects the scope and strength of the work being done by our researchers, clinicians and staff members.

And speaking of researchers, we are celebrating the pinnacle of success for one of our own, Dr. Aziz Sancar. On October 7, 2015, Aziz was notified that he had been awarded the 2015 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. This is a well-deserved honor for Aziz, who has studied the fundamental biochemistry of

DNA repair at UNC for more than 30 years and has greatly enhanced our understanding of the basic biology of cancer and aging. He has been a wonderful friend, mentor and colleague to scientists across our university, and we are extremely proud of his accomplishments.

In clinical news, the Comprehensive Cancer Support Program is celebrating the arrival of Lauren Lux, our new Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Liaison. This new role, the first of its kind in the U.S., is designed to help AYA patients through their cancer diagnosis and treatment. Lauren fills a gap that has long existed in the world of cancer, and we are so pleased to add this new component to our realm of care.

And finally, I'd like to take a moment to celebrate you and to thank you for your faithful financial support of UNC Lineberger. Your giving has made so much of our success possible, and we have so much more to look forward to, wouldn't you agree? In my opinion, 40 never looked so good. 🍷

## From Pastor to Patient *continued from page 1*



*Writing is supposed to be helpful in healing, but I didn't realize how much. According to the American Psychological Association, research shows that journaling helps people manage and learn from negative experiences. Writing can even strengthen their immune systems, as well as their minds.*

When I'd go to chemo, I'd ride the back hall elevator of the N.C. Cancer Hospital to my treatments on Mondays so I wouldn't see any coworkers. I'd take my laptop with me, and I'd work during my treatment. I wasn't going to let cancer interrupt my life any more than I had to.

After I completed my chemotherapy, I rested for about a month before my surgical oncologist Dr. Nancy DeMore did my mastectomy. My cancer had spread to the lymph nodes, and she removed 22 during the surgery. Dr. Clara Lee was the plastic surgeon who later did my breast reconstruction. In March 2012, I started radiation, five days a week for five weeks, and that's when fatigue set in.

Around that same time, my coworker Heidi Gessner, the Bereavement Coordinator at UNC Hospitals, and local writer Carol

Henderson began working together to create a writing program called 'Writing for Caregivers.' Their thought was, 'Why not offer an opportunity like expressive and creative writing to help anyone in the hospital to heal, regardless of their issue?' In January 2013, the writing group came to fruition, thanks to a grant from Project Compassion. The writing sessions are now offered weekly through the hospital's bereavement program.

When I first attended the writing program, I was very reticent about sharing my experiences and feelings with other participants, but doing so helped me accept

that I had cancer. I wasn't playing the role of minister; I could be vulnerable with others and my staff. Writing gave me the freedom to say, 'I'm not alone in this,' and it gave my heart and my head a chance to come together and reconcile in this group. I poured out my emotions weekly and mourned over the experience. In my writing, I talked about loss, about losing a part of my body. My writing became graphic, and I finally was able to own the fact that I had lost a breast to cancer.

On November 4, 2014, UNC Hospitals celebrated National Grief Day, and organizers sponsored a poetry reading. I was encouraged to read a piece I'd written in my writing class. When I told a standing-room-only crowd at the reading that, "My name is Shay Greene, and I'm a cancer survivor," mouths dropped to the floor. Hardly anyone knew that I'd been sick.

Now I work on 5 West, and I visit patients with similar conditions. Cancer has changed my ministry, because now I know on a different level what the words 'I have cancer' mean. People are in deep despair, and they may not share their fears with their spouse, their family or their friends. That's why I'm there. I share their feelings.

A cancer diagnosis often brings about spiritual distress, and part of being a chaplain is assessing people's spirituality or faith expressions. When I know someone is a person of faith, I ask them a few simple questions: Do you feel God's presence? Are you talking with God? Are you fighting with God? I listen to the answers and assure them there is no right or wrong answer. I remind them that moving out of spiritual distress is a journey that brings about change and takes time. I've been in that muck, I've struggled with anger towards God. I've grieved, I've felt hopeless, scared, and emotionally exhausted. But it wasn't until I was able to put words to my grief that I was able to move out of spiritual distress and, through my faith, claim hope.

Writing is a way I still care for myself, and when I share, I know I'm helping others. Now I am moving into a stage of feeling possibility and hope. I have so much to be thankful for, and I realize I don't have to live life worrying about the future. I can ask questions and then leave them on paper, knowing the answers don't have to come right now.

*Shay and Jeff married on June 16, 2012 at Topsail Beach, N.C. They enjoy celebrating new beginnings with their blended family. 🍷*

## Personalized breast cancer treatment continued from page 1

and see if these new genomic classifications make a difference in terms of patient's responsiveness to drugs," Perou said. "This is how personalized medicine is developed."

Invasive lobular breast cancers represent about 10 to 15 percent of invasive breast cancers, and are the second most commonly diagnosed invasive breast histological type behind invasive ductal carcinoma. These cancers develop in the milk-producing glands of the breast, according to the American Cancer Society. This cancer type is harder to detect and can pose challenges to the surgeon in identifying the extent of the cancer, said Lisa Carey, MD, co-director of the UNC Breast Center, physician-in-chief of the N.C. Cancer Hospital, and the Richardson and Marilyn Jacobs Preyer Distinguished Professor in Breast Cancer Research.

"We treat them similarly to their more common ductal counterparts, but in part because we have a poor understanding of the biology underlying lobular carcinomas," Carey said. "Gaining insight into the molecular basis for lobular breast cancer may allow us to tailor treatments specifically for them in the future."



Alice Glover, breast cancer survivor

For Alice Glover, a Chapel Hill-based attorney and breast cancer survivor, research advances give her hope that other women diagnosed with invasive lobular carcinoma will benefit from targeted treatments.

Six years have passed since Glover's initial diagnosis of stage III invasive lobular carcinoma. Getting the diagnosis was a scary process, as lobular carcinoma can be more difficult to detect. Glover had felt something unusual, but it didn't feel like a hard lump. After three visits to her general physician, she was referred for testing and was diagnosed. At the N.C. Cancer Hospital, she went through a treatment regimen that included surgery, radiation and chemotherapy. She is now considered cancer-free, although she continues to take a breast cancer drug.

Friends, family and humor helped Glover through treatment, and she also got support from a post-treatment exercise and mindfulness program at the N.C. Cancer Hospital. She says she looks forward to hearing more about new therapies and technologies that could help others with the disease.

"It's always so encouraging to learn about the advances and methods researchers are using that enable them to better target breast cancer, like this study led by Dr. Perou at UNC," Glover said. "That just makes me feel proud of UNC, but also hopeful for other patients who may be able to take advantage of more targeted chemotherapy and treatments." 8

## UNC Lineberger researcher wins Nobel Prize



Dr. Sancar's 2015 Nobel Prize for Chemistry is the pinnacle reward for a scientist whose prolific career has made a huge impact on the well-being of people around the world," said Chancellor Carol L. Folt.

Aziz Sancar, MD, PhD, the Sarah Graham Kenan Professor of Biochemistry and Biophysics at the UNC School of Medicine, has been awarded the 2015 Nobel Prize for Chemistry.

Sancar, who has been a professor at UNC since 1982, earned the award for his work on mapping the cellular mechanisms that underlie DNA repair, which occurs

every single minute of the day due to outside forces, such as ultraviolet radiation and other environmental factors. In particular, Sancar mapped nucleotide excision repair, which plays a pivotal role in UV damage to DNA. When this repair system is defective, people exposed to sunlight develop skin cancer. Sancar also showed that other substances can damage the nucleotide excision repair system. His work provides the crucial basic knowledge necessary to develop better treatments that protect against DNA damage, which can result in cancer.

Additionally, researchers in Sancar's lab discovered how the common cancer drug Cisplatin and others like it damage the DNA of cancer cells. This finding has led to further research to figure out how to better target and kill cancer cells.

"This award is an incredible honor," said Sancar, who is a member of the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center. "It means a great deal to me and my lab. We've been working hard for many years, and I think we've made significant contributions to our field. It's been a great team effort."

Sancar's work dates back to 1974, when he was a graduate student at the University of Texas. The most recent work was accomplished earlier this year when his team created a DNA repair map of the entire human genome.

Bill Roper, MD, Dean of the UNC School of Medicine, said, "It's a tremendous honor for Dr. Sancar, this recognition of his amazing scientific accomplishment. And it's a special day for us as a university because this is the second Nobel Prize awarded to a faculty member of UNC and the School of Medicine.

In 2007, Oliver Smithies, PhD, Weatherspoon Eminent Distinguished Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. 8

## Oncology Excellence Awards

Four members of the UNC Health Care staff have been awarded the 2015 UNC Lineberger Oncology Excellence Awards. The award recipients in the nursing category are Kathryn Broach, RN, BSN, OCN, Inpatient Bone Marrow Transplant Unit Nurse, CN IV and Anna Kate Owens, MSN, RN, FNP-BC, Nurse Practitioner, Multi-Disciplinary Breast Team. Winners in the service category are Lesley Michael Hoyle, BS, CMD, RTT, Medical Dosimetrist, Radiation Oncology and Cindy Rogers, JD, Patient Assistance Coordinator, CCSP. Combined, these professionals have dedicated more than 30 years of service in oncology at UNC. Honorees were recognized at a ceremony on Thursday, Oct. 15, in the N.C. Cancer Hospital. This awards program is funded by UNC Lineberger donors. 8



Kathryn Broach



Anna Kate Owens



Lesley Michael Hoyle



Cindy Rogers

## Ron Chen, MD, PhD — An agent for change



Realizing that the path he was on wasn't the right one, Ron Chen made a life-changing decision as a college student that ultimately led him to his calling as a cancer physician and researcher.

Chen took a year off from the University of Kansas, where he had been studying chemical engineering, to volunteer fulltime as a caregiver for

terminal cancer patients. He lived in a two-story hospice care house with the patients and other volunteers. They cooked for the patients, bathed them, and kept them company in the last months of their lives.

"It was intense, and also life-changing," Chen said. "It inspired me to want to go into a career where I could help cancer patients, and maybe even do research to try to improve conditions for them. That was 20 years ago, and I'm still on the same path."

After a year of volunteering, Chen went back to finish college, and applied to medical school. He was accepted at Harvard Medical School, and then to the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Now Chen, MD, MPH, is a physician-researcher at the University of North Carolina Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center and an associate professor in the UNC School of Medicine Department of Radiation Oncology. He splits his time between research and clinical care as a radiation oncologist. He has a passion for research that can directly help his patients in the clinic, specifically focusing on comparing different treatments for prostate cancer on patient outcomes, and issues related to cancer survivorship.

Born in Taiwan, Chen moved to the United States when he was 12. When he started school in the United States, he was enrolled in English as a Second Language classes. He also worked each week in the family restaurant alongside his parents. He had a natural ability in math and science, and that led him to chemical engineering in college. But he was also heavily involved in volunteering. And that work — in homeless shelters and in soup kitchens — led him to his experience in hospice care and medicine.

It was as a medical student at Harvard that he found his particular calling in prostate cancer research. Through a mentor-match program, he started working with a pioneer in the field of quality of life research. Now at UNC, Chen's research focuses on studying the side effects and quality of life impact of cancer treatments. There's a particular need for research focused on survivorship, Chen

said, as many cancers now have high survival rates due to early detection and better treatments. But treatment can also result in side effects that impact patients' long-term quality of life.

"I think part of the reason I'm drawn to prostate cancer research is that it's a highly curable type of cancer, and because the majority of patients are cured, that shifts the focus to what happens after the cure," Chen said.

There's also a need for the type of work Chen does because of new treatment technologies, such as robot-assisted surgery for prostate cancer, that have emerged and continue to be developed. In 2012, he was senior author of a study published in JAMA that found no significant difference in prostate cancer patient outcomes between an expensive form of radiation treatment called proton therapy, and a more common type of radiation called intensity-modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) — except for an association between proton therapy and increased side effects in the gastrointestinal tract. While proton therapy has been touted as a more precise treatment, Chen's study was one of the first to actually compare it against the more common IMRT in terms of prostate cancer patient outcomes.

"The issue is that patients are bombarded with messages about new things — robotic surgery or proton therapy — or whatever the latest technology is," Chen said. "We need formal research to really compare these technologies head to head so we can tell patients which is best for them, and how the new treatments could affect their quality of life or cure rates."

Chen is currently leading several studies that focus on prostate cancer survivors. A new study will soon be underway that focuses on the question of how often prostate cancer survivors should be monitored for recurrence, and whether the frequency of monitoring should be different based on the aggressiveness of the patient's cancer and type of treatment he received. The study will be one of the first of its kind. He won a three-year, more than \$1.7 million award from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute for this work.

"This is a question that has the potential to affect millions of prostate cancer survivors," he said.

In addition to his research and role in the clinic, Chen also values opportunities to teach and mentor students and residents. He has been the primary advisor for UNC medical students interested in pursuing radiation oncology, and now also serves as the program director for UNC's Radiation Oncology Residency program. He has won several UNC and national awards for his roles as a teacher and mentor.

Outside of work, Chen enjoys traveling with his family in and around North Carolina. He's a father of two, and each summer, he and his family try to go to a different beach. And each Thanksgiving, they try to see a different section of the Blue Ridge Parkway. He's in his sixth year at UNC and believes it's an "incredible environment" for the research he's doing, for junior faculty training, and for raising a family. 🐾

### Welcome, Betsy Gentry-Bumm!



Betsy Gentry-Bumm has joined the UNC Lineberger team as the Director of Annual Giving. Prior to joining the team, she spent six years at Duke University in fundraising. Betsy is a native of the Triangle and graduated from North Carolina State University in 2002. She and her husband, Luke, have settled in Durham with their two young boys. In

her spare time, Betsy enjoys running, watching basketball, and spending time with her family. Do you have questions about the Annual Giving Program? Contact Betsy at (919) 962-8458 or [Betsy\\_Gentry-Bumm@med.unc.edu](mailto:Betsy_Gentry-Bumm@med.unc.edu) 🐾



**She ROCKS** hosted its 2nd annual fundraising luncheon on September 17 in Wilmington, N.C., where Dr. Vickie Bae-Jump, a UNC Lineberger member and Assistant Professor in the UNC Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, served as keynote speaker. She Rocks is a loyal UNC Lineberger supporter dedicated to raising funds for ovarian cancer research and providing local support to people affected by all cancers. The group raised \$100,000 for the cancer center. 🐾



Jen Jen Yeh, MD

## Pancreatic cancer subtypes discovered in largest gene expression analysis to-date

Pancreatic cancer is one of the deadliest cancers, with only seven percent of patients surviving five years. As treatment of the disease is a race against time, researchers are working to try to get the right treatment to the right patient from the start.

A UNC Lineberger

Comprehensive Cancer Center study has revealed new subtypes of the disease that they hope will do just that. Through a large genomic analysis of pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma, they revealed new disease subtypes that they hope will lay the foundation for personalized treatment.

“We believe these results will set the groundwork for future clinical trials, allow treatments to be assigned based on the subtypes, and guide the development of new therapies,” said the study’s senior author Jen Jen Yeh, MD, a UNC Lineberger member and an associate professor and the vice chair for research in the UNC School of Medicine Department of Surgery. Yeh also has an appointment in the UNC School of Medicine Pharmacology Department.

In the study published in the journal *Nature Genetics*, UNC Lineberger researchers revealed two distinct subtypes of pancreatic cancer, one of which is strongly linked to worse patient outcomes. The researchers also found that pancreatic cancer patients can have different kinds of stroma – dense tissue surrounding tumors that can block drugs, but also keep cancer cells from spreading. Subtypes of stroma, too, were linked to different survival outcomes.

Previous studies have attempted to identify subtypes of pancreatic cancer. But the researchers believe those attempts were confounded by the large amount of surrounding stroma mixing with both normal and cancerous pancreatic tissue.

To solve that problem, the researchers used a mathematical approach led by Richard Moffitt, PhD, a postdoctoral research associate at UNC Lineberger, to separate the tissue. That approach, called blind source separation, allowed the researchers to separate the normal from the cancerous tissue and the stroma. They were then able to examine gene expression patterns for each type in tissue samples from five different institutions.

The researchers uncovered two subtypes of pancreatic stroma that they called “normal” and “activated.” Patients with the activated subtype had worse survival outcomes.

Their analysis also revealed two subtypes of pancreatic cancer tumors. One subtype, called “basal-like,” is linked to worse outcomes for patients. Forty-four percent of patients with the basal-like subtype lived one year after surgery, compared to a 70 percent survival for patients with other subtype, which they called “classical.” Basal-like tumors also trended toward a better response to adjuvant therapy.

Overall, the findings suggest that treatment decisions should be based on both a patient’s stroma and tumor subtype. Yeh said the researchers will be launching clinical trials to investigate how patients with the different subtypes respond to treatment.

“For pancreatic cancer in particular, it’s a race against the clock. Every therapy counts, so you want your first therapy to work,” she said. “So the goal is to start patients on the right therapy from the get-go.”

*The study was supported in part by the National Cancer Institute, the University Cancer Research Fund, the Sidney Kimmel Foundation, the American College of Surgeons, and a UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center Postdoctoral Training Grant.*



John Baron, MD

## UNC Lineberger-led study finds vitamin D and calcium do not reduce colorectal polyp risk

A large, randomized study led by a UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center researcher found that vitamin D and calcium supplements do not reduce the risk of benign tumors that can evolve into colorectal cancer.

The results, which were published in the *New England Journal of*

*Medicine*, came as a disappointment to the researchers.

“Vitamin D has been investigated for its protective benefits against a range of diseases, including colorectal cancer,” said the study’s lead author John Baron, MD, MS, MSc, a UNC Lineberger member and professor in the UNC School of Medicine Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology and UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health. “We found that vitamin D and calcium supplements did not affect the occurrence of colon polyps, which are benign precursors to colorectal cancer. So our results came as a disappointment.”

The study included 2,259 people at 11 academic medical centers or affiliated medical practices. Patients recently diagnosed with precancerous adenomas, but who had no colorectal polyps remaining after a colonoscopy, were included.

Even after adjustment for variables such as age, gender and study center, there was essentially no difference between groups taking higher vitamin D or higher calcium, or both, than groups that were not in the risk of adenomas.



Tony Amelio, PhD

## Researchers design ‘biological flashlight’ using light-producing ability of shrimp

Using the natural light-producing ability of deep-sea shrimp, a UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center researcher and a team of scientists developed a new imaging tool to help cancer researchers better track tumor development and treatment responses.

They described the design and engineering of the new bioluminescent imaging tool in a study published in the journal *Cancer Research*. Their design adapts an enzyme from the deep-sea shrimp *Oplophorus gracilirostris*. The shrimp normally uses this enzyme, called a luciferase, to emit a cloud of glowing blue light to confuse predators.

“We’ve designed an imaging tool that offers researchers a way to more easily detect cancer cells, and importantly, at various stages of tumor development,” said the study’s senior author Antonio “Tony” Amelio, PhD, a UNC Lineberger member and assistant professor in the University of North Carolina School of Dentistry.

The researchers showed that this new tool generates intense light. They believe it will be a highly sensitive tool useful in preclinical studies to test the effectiveness of cancer drugs.

“Other bioluminescent imaging tools are available and have been used for years, but what we have now is considerably more sensitive, meaning that you can get information earlier about the effectiveness of an investigational drug,” Amelio said. 8

**Get the latest UNC Lineberger research, inspiring patient stories, and upcoming events in your inbox! Subscribe at [UNCLineberger.org/signup](http://UNCLineberger.org/signup)**

## Ken and Cheryl Williams make \$10 Million Gift to Advance Cancer Research

*"When you look back on your life, you have to ask yourself, 'What is my legacy? Have I done what I can to help others? Is this world a better place because I was here?' Those are big questions, but cancer is a big disease."*

—Cheryl Williams

Ken and Cheryl Williams moved to Chapel Hill in 1988, when their younger children were just in the second and fourth grades. Ken, who received his master's degree from UNC's School of Public Health (now the Gillings School of Global Public Health) in 1970, and his doctorate in 1976, was already a true-blue alum, but Cheryl got her first 'taste of Carolina' at a UNC men's basketball game. She and Ken soon became regulars at a variety of athletic events.

Through the years, the Williams' love for the university has grown, and so has their support for both academics and athletics. "We've given to the Education Foundation for at least 20 years," explains Cheryl. "And Ken is on the Executive Board of The Rams Club, where he has served as chair and on numerous committees. We've always been proud of the endowed scholarships we fund and have enjoyed getting to know the student athletes who have been supported by them." The couple has also participated in a number of Rams Club capital projects.

As Ken and Cheryl were introduced to various members of the Carolina community, their connection to UNC Lineberger evolved. Cheryl played a vital role in Lineberger's Tickled Pink fundraising event, during which she became good friends with fellow volunteer Jean Durham and her husband, Woody, the legendary 'Voice of the Tar Heels.' Soon after, Ken and Cheryl were asked to serve on the Board of Visitors. "I spent my professional career in pharmaceutical research," explains Ken, who retired as a senior vice president from Quintiles, the world's largest provider of biopharmaceutical development and commercial outsourcing services. "So I've always been interested in new, cutting edge treatments and therapies. That's one of the things UNC Lineberger is known for — being a world-class leader in cancer research — so Cheryl and I were very interested in finding a way we could support the cancer center's mission. Also, we both have personally suffered loss due to cancer, so we're passionate about the quest for cures."

Cheryl's mother died from breast cancer at the young age of 52, and Ken's father died of mesothelioma. Then last year, Ken's 94-year-old mother was diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL). "We naturally brought her to Lineberger to be treated," says Ken. "We were already impressed with UNC Lineberger from a philanthropic perspective, but when Cheryl and I experienced the organization from a caregiver's viewpoint, we were sold. Every person who has played a role in my mom's care has been so supportive and knowledgeable. Their expertise, combined with the state-of-the-art facilities and technology, make UNC Lineberger a



destination for cancer care. It's been such a relief to know she's in good hands."

Through the Ken and Cheryl Williams Fund for Venture Initiatives at UNC Lineberger, Ken and Cheryl decided to make the extraordinary gift of \$10 million to fund cancer research initiatives that hold the greatest promise for cures. The gift is unrestricted, giving leaders of the cancer center the greatest flexibility to earmark the funds for emerging research opportunities that can make the greatest impact against cancer.

When Chancellor Carol Folt recently announced the gift at the UNC Lineberger Blue Ribbon Gala, she noted that this was the largest gift to date in the history of the cancer center. Ken was quick to remark that he hoped this particular record would not stand for long and challenged others to match and exceed it.

"Truthfully, the gift was a large part of our estate," explains Ken. "But after having made generous provisions for our loved ones, Cheryl and I felt strongly about putting the balance of our resources to work for a purpose that truly matters, and we can't think of a better place to invest those resources than at UNC Lineberger. We have faith that researchers will eventually unlock the mysteries behind cancer, and there's no reason those discoveries can't be made right here in Chapel Hill, North Carolina."

Dr. Ned Sharpless, UNC Lineberger Director, said the impact of the gift will be far-reaching. "This is a transformational gift for the cancer center. We are so proud to have Ken and Cheryl's tremendous confidence and support in our fight to end cancer as we know it. The Williams' understand the urgency of our mission. This gift will save lives." 8

### The Tony Williams Lobby



As part of Ken and Cheryl's transformational \$10 million gift, they have chosen to name the lobby of the N.C. Cancer Hospital after their son, Tony Williams, who passed away in 2013 at the age of 33. Tony was an avid sportsman, spending much of his leisure time hunting and saltwater-fishing with his father. He also shared his parents' love for Carolina and enjoyed

attending games with the family. "The pain of losing Tony is a sorrow that will always be a part of our lives," Ken says. "Cheryl and I hope that through our gift to UNC Lineberger, and because of the life-saving cancer research it will fund, eventually, other families won't have to experience the suffering that accompanies the loss of a loved one." 8



UNC Lineberger produces an annual publication to recognize individuals and organizations that have led with gifts and pledges of \$1,000 or more to the cancer center during the fiscal year (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015). For a complete donor listing, we invite you to visit [www.unclineberger.org/honorroll](http://www.unclineberger.org/honorroll).

## Filling the support gap for young adult cancer patients

Being a teenager is tough. Now, imagine being a teenager and having to deal with a cancer diagnosis.

Adolescent and young adult (AYA) cancer patients are not only in a stage of life where they're discovering who they are, gaining independence from their parents and laying the foundation for adulthood; they're also having to deal with the pain, stress and confusion that comes along with a life-changing cancer diagnosis.

"Across the country, there is a growing appreciation of the unique needs of teenagers and young adults who have cancer," said Don Rosenstein, MD, Director of UNC Lineberger's Comprehensive Cancer Support Program. "Individuals in this age range must face all the realities of cancer, just as they are solidifying their identities and beginning their adult lives."

Unfortunately, there are still huge gaps in terms of their personalized psychosocial care. UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer has teamed up with the Be Loud! Sophie Foundation to change that.

The Be Loud! Sophie foundation, a local nonprofit supporting AYA patients, was established in memory of Sophie Steiner.

Diagnosed with germ-cell cancer at age 14, Sophie spent months undergoing treatment at UNC Lineberger. An energetic, sharp young woman, it did not take long for Sophie to recognize that, while she was receiving the best care available, there was nothing specifically designed for people her age. This absence of resources in tailored care for adolescent and young adult patients — those ages 13 to 26 — is something that the National Cancer Institute has referred to as a "no man's land."

To address the specific psychosocial needs of this age group, UNC Lineberger created a unique liaison role at the N.C. Cancer Hospital dedicated to designing support programs and providing resources to this demographic. Now, they have found the perfect fit, hiring Lauren Lux, LCSW, to serve as the nation's first Adolescent and Young Adult Liaison. While completing her master's degree in social work, Lux wrote a grant that created the first full-time pediatric oncology social worker position at the University of Illinois-Chicago, a job she held for three years. Her husband's graduate studies brought the couple to the Triangle in 2011, where Lux held positions at Duke Hospital and most recently at the Center for Child and

Family Health in Durham.

Lux says Sophie Steiner's experience is representative of that which many AYA patients are currently experiencing in the U.S.

"It's a tough group because they're not kids, and they're not adults," she said. "They don't necessarily feel at home in a pediatric world, and they don't really feel at home in an adult world. My main objective is to help this patient population maintain their identity and dignity."

With a focus on personhood and humanness, she will design programs that support these patients in a way that reminds them of what they love about life.

"One of the goals we have is that cancer will become a part of the patient's narrative," said Lux. "But it won't become all of it." 8



Lauren Lux, AYA Liaison



Crown Imports announced that "Corona Cares," the highly successful cornerstone initiative of Crown's corporate social responsibility program, has raised \$200,000 in North Carolina this year to benefit patient and family support programs at the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center. From left: Bill Renspie (Constellation Brands), Michelle Manning (UNC – CCSP), Rodney Long (Long Beverage, UNC Lineberger Board of Visitors), Joe DeLaPaz (Constellation Brands)

Tar Heel men's basketball coach Roy Williams' 2015 "Fast Break Against Cancer" breakfast fundraiser featured keynote speaker Brigham Young University men's basketball coach Dave Rose, a pancreatic cancer survivor who spoke about lessons he has learned during his cancer journey. Now in its 11th year, Fast Break Against Cancer has surpassed the \$2 million mark for cancer research and treatment at UNC Lineberger. Presented by Atlantic Packaging, this year's breakfast concluded with a live auction featuring the most unique item in the history of Fast Break: a Carolina blue office chair that was used by legendary Tar Heel basketball coach Dean Smith. The winning bidder at \$15,000 was Dr. Mark Graham, a former oncologist at UNC Lineberger who is now in private practice at Waverly Hematology and Oncology.



# calendar of events

## December

**31<sup>st</sup>** End of the tax year; make your tax-deductible donation to UNC Lineberger at [www.unclineberger.org/giving](http://www.unclineberger.org/giving).

## February

**20<sup>th</sup>** 29th Annual Lineberger Club Brunch

## April

**23<sup>rd</sup>** Tar Heel 10-Miler

To find out more about these events and other UNC Lineberger news, visit [www.unclineberger.org](http://www.unclineberger.org), or follow us on [f](#) [t](#)



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(919) 966-5905  
[www.unclineberger.org](http://www.unclineberger.org)

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## Blue Ribbon Gala In Review

UNC Lineberger hosted its 2nd Blue Ribbon Gala on September 18, 2015, gathering more than 400 people to celebrate advancements in cancer care at UNC. A select few were honored at the black-tie event who have made significant contributions to Lineberger in the fight against cancer, including Dr. Fred Eshelman, a philanthropist and venture capitalist, and Mr. Nicholas Valvano, president emeritus of The V Foundation for Cancer Research. Guests also heard the stories of three Lineberger patients who battled and overcame their cancers: Amy Charney, Rengate Alston, and 6-year-old Phineas Sandi. The event raised more than \$200,000 for the cancer center. [8](#)



Rengate and Sophia Alston



Raye Sapp and Betty Ray McCain



Loretta and Dr. Hy Muss

## 2015 Holiday cards



Did you know that UNC Lineberger will send your holiday greeting cards for you? We make it easy for you to spread cheer amongst your family and friends while you support the programs that directly benefit the cancer patients at the N.C. Cancer Hospital.

Make at least a minimum donation of \$100, then send your greeting card address list to us. We'll take care of the rest! Email your list to [Kathryn\\_Hunter@med.unc.edu](mailto:Kathryn_Hunter@med.unc.edu), or mail it to:

Kathryn Hunter  
UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center  
Office of Development and Communications  
CB 7295  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599

*\*Please note that lists must be sent by December 18, 2015 to ensure your cards are mailed before December 25, 2015. Lists sent after this date may have a new year's send date. Have questions? Call Kathryn Hunter at (919)966-5906.*