

cancerlines



UNC
LINEBERGER

Decoding the manual of head and neck cancer



Dr. Neil Hayes (left) treats head and neck patients and was also the lead author on the study to uncover genomic changes in head and neck cancers.

“Just like in a car manual, you need to know what kind of car you have and what the parts are to know how to put it back together,” says UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center member Dr. Neil Hayes. “We really have built a parts manual for what’s broken in cancer so that we can start addressing it in a logical and a real way.”

In a study led by Hayes, researchers have now identified parts of that “manual” for head and neck cancer, successfully identifying the genomic changes in head and neck cancers related to smoking and those related to a virus, the human papillomavirus (HPV).

The study by The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) researchers analyzed the genomes of 279 head and neck cancer tumors. They identified genomic subtypes of head and neck cancer in addition to changes in smoking-related tumors and tumors linked to HPV, the most common sexually transmitted disease in the United States.

“This research has now clarified the set of common genetic alterations in head and neck cancer,” said Hayes. “These are alterations that should be connected to future quests for therapy, and the quest for biomarker associations for outcome.”

Head and neck cancers, which include tumors of the mouth, throat, voice box, nasal cavity and salivary gland, make up about 3 percent of all cancer cases in the United States, according to the National Cancer Institute. There were an estimated 55,000 new cases diagnosed last year. In North Carolina, there were 1,850 new cases of head and neck cancer in 2012, which was up about 3 percent from 2011.

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Her First Thought

When a young woman receives a cancer diagnosis, her obvious first thought is: “I want to survive this.” When that cancer diagnosis has an impact on her ability to have children, she has a second thought.

Tonya Caldwell was just 25 years old when she received a diagnosis of stage IB cervical cancer. Most women with that diagnosis are treated with hysterectomy. “I was devastated,” she recalls. “I didn’t know what to do, what to think — and I was told I may never have children.” As hard as it was to hear she had cancer, it was even harder to for her to hear she might never have children.

Crystal Lasonde hadn’t thought much about motherhood prior to her diagnosis of cervical cancer in 2011. Only 31 at the time, she was focused on her marriage and career.

So frightening was the diagnosis of cancer, that the possibility of losing the ability to have children didn’t cross her mind. “I was scared because I had cancer, so I didn’t think about it,” she says.

Fortunately, Caldwell and Lasonde were referred to Dr. John Boggess at UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center. Boggess is one of a small number of doctors in the U.S. offering another procedure to young cervical cancer patients known as a trachelectomy. This surgery removes the cervix, nearby lymph nodes and the upper part of the vagina. The uterus and ovaries remain intact thus preserving fertility. Following a trachelectomy, women are often able to carry a pregnancy to term and deliver by cesarean section.

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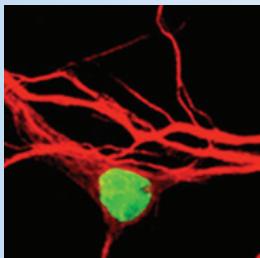


Tonya Caldwell (left) with son Eli and Crystal Lasonde with son Jacob

the inside line up



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UNC
CANCER CARE

director's message



Ned Sharpless, MD

January marked the one year anniversary of my directorship of this remarkable cancer center — and what a year it has been. In the last year, we have enrolled over 800 patients on cancer treatment trials. Many of these trials are paving the way for advances in treatment through early-phase cancer research and will be opening the doors to new options for our patients. We also expanded the landscape of our cancer

center, moving into several floors of the new Marsico Hall, the newest and largest research building on the campus of UNC-Chapel Hill. Our entire genomics and immunotherapy programs will now be housed in this state-of-the-art research facility. And we received a multitude of major grants and awards, including three major federal grants to advance the nation's clinical trials program, significant funding to study the growing worldwide cancer problem in Malawi along with our 11th V Scholar Award to support lung cancer research.

The leading-edge cancer research we conduct at UNC Lineberger is complimented with the exceptional care received by our patients. In this issue, you will read about the amazing journey of two young cervical cancer survivors. When faced with the disease at a young age and with a diagnosis that often eliminates a women's ability to have children naturally, these two women were provided a fertility preserving surgery. This robotic-assisted procedure done by UNC Lineberger member Dr. John Boggess not only

treated the cancer for these two young women, but also preserved their fertility. And both of these women are now not only cancer survivors, but young moms as well. This story is just one of many that captures what makes UNC such a special place — that our focus is not only on treating cancer, but preserving a patient's quality of life as well.

You will also read about an exciting announcement we made earlier this year. With funding from The Duke Endowment, we have established a statewide network to support cancer survivors across North Carolina. This effort, led by UNC Comprehensive Cancer Support Program Director Don Rosenstein, MD, will equip health care providers across NC to better address the unique needs of the growing number of cancer survivors in our state.

We also continue our national efforts with The Cancer Genome Atlas network. Just last month, we celebrated the 10,000th tumor sample sequenced using the genomic sequencing facilities we have developed at UNC Lineberger with support from the University Cancer Research Fund. This effort has helped us uncover the genetic subtypes of many different types of cancer from lung to breast. As you will read in our feature article of this issue of Cancer Lines, we have most recently analyzed the sub-types of head and neck cancer, a type of cancer that is prevalent in North Carolina.

As I reflect on this last year, I cannot help but be inspired by the advances we have made and be highly motivated by the advancements to come. In 2015, we will see a massive expansion of our Immunotherapy Program, continued efforts being made in cancer genetics as well as expanded services for cancer patients across the state. Thank you for all that you do to support us in this progress — and our continued progress moving forward. 8

Her first thought *continued from page 1*



John Boggess, MD

Caldwell was thrilled to have a treatment option that could preserve her ability to bear children. She was told that the surgical team would go in with the intention to remove only the cervix and surrounding lymph nodes. However, she was cautioned that if they saw the cancer had spread, they would have to perform a hysterectomy.

She recalls that the first words she spoke when she woke from surgery were “Can I have kids?” And happily, the answer was “Yes!”

Six years after her diagnosis of cervical cancer, Caldwell and her husband are parents of one-year-old Eli.

Caldwell's obstetrician had never taken care of a patient without a cervix before and wasn't quite sure what to expect. Some extra precautions were taken including progesterone injections and frequent ultrasound examinations. Caldwell says that Dr. Boggess' surgical work was so good that one ultrasound technician couldn't believe that she didn't have a cervix because it looked like she had a complete cervix on the ultrasound.

Lasonde was also happy to have a fertility-sparing treatment option, but she says

She recalls that the first words she spoke when she woke from surgery were “Can I have kids?” And happily, the answer was “Yes!”

she didn't fully appreciate it until she and her husband welcomed their son, Jacob in February 2014. “I think it's so cool that I was able to become a mother!” she says. “I love it! I didn't think I would love it this much. People tell you that you're never going to experience love like this, but you don't really understand. Then it happens, and it's just the coolest thing ever.”

Boggess was among the first to hear the news of Caldwell and Lasonde's pregnancies. Both women say that he was as excited as they were.

Boggess still watches the new moms closely. He followed their progress throughout their pregnancies and has met both Jacob and Eli. “Every time I see him he gives me a high five and a big hug. He's a very good man,” Caldwell says with emotion.

Caldwell wants others to know that there is hope for young cervical cancer patients saying, “It's not the end of the world. It is devastating to hear, but there is something that can be done.”

“Eli is truly our miracle baby,” says Caldwell. “I am overjoyed,” she says. “I always wanted to be a mom, and I'm a mom now.” And soon, Eli will be a big brother. Caldwell is expecting her second child later this year. 8



To see a video of this story, please visit bit.ly/1zwTW5a

Decoding the manual *continued from page 1*

“In western, developed countries there’s an epidemic of HPV-associated tumors,” Hayes said. “How HPV causes cancer, and its role in sustaining cancer, is — especially in head and neck cancer — a very active area of research.”

They found tumors with deletions and mutations of a gene called TRAF3, which Hayes said is involved in host immunity against viruses. Hayes said the changes

were “mechanically interesting” and could be an area worth study as a potential drug target.

In the study, the researchers also found alterations of the FGFR3 gene and mutations in the PIK3CA gene in HPV positive tumors, which are also found in a much broader set of mutations in smoking-related tumors. PIK3CA has already been shown to be associated with HPV, Hayes said, but he said they

showed the link clearly in their study.

In addition to helping understand genomic changes in head and neck cancer, Hayes said the study’s findings many also help further the understanding of other cancer types. And while Hayes said TCGA efforts have helped create a “parts list” of genomic alternations in a range of cancers, he said there are cancer types for which more genomic mapping is needed.

This research is the latest finding of a collaborative scientific effort that’s designed to map out the genomic changes driving cancer — an effort that UNC Lineberger has been a leader in since day one.

As leaders within TCGA, UNC Lineberger scientists have been involved in multiple individual tissue type studies, including a comprehensive genomic profile of lung adenocarcinoma. UNC did RNA sequencing work for those projects, and also contributed tissue samples, analysis, among other contributions. TCGA is supported and managed by the National Cancer Institute and the National Human Genome Research Institute. The TCGA network includes researchers at institutions around the country and globe. 8

“This research has now clarified the set of common genetic alterations in head and neck cancer,” said Hayes. “These are alterations that should be connected to future quests for therapy, and the quest for biomarker associations for outcome.”

New device drives drugs into hard to reach pancreatic tumors

UNC Lineberger researchers have developed a device that can drive chemotherapy drugs directly into pancreatic tumors, which are notorious for having a fortress of protective tissue that makes them difficult to target for drug treatment. The work represents a new treatment approach for pancreatic cancer, which has a 75 percent mortality rate within a year of diagnosis — a statistic that has not changed in decades.

The device uses electric fields to drive the drugs into the tumors, preventing their growth and in some cases, shrinking them. The work opens the possibility of dramatically increasing the number of people who are eligible for life-saving surgeries.

“Surgery to remove a tumor currently provides the best chance to cure pancreatic cancer,” said Joe DeSimone, PhD, Chancellor’s Eminent Professor of Chemistry at UNC and William R. Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor of Chemical Engineering at NC State University. “However, often a diagnosis comes too late for a patient to be eligible for surgery due to the tendency of the tumors to become intertwined with major organs and blood vessels.”

James Byrne, PhD, a member of DeSimone’s lab in Chapel Hill, led the research by constructing the device and examining its ability to deliver chemotherapeutic drugs to pancreatic cancer tumors as well as to two types of breast cancer tumors. Researchers also demonstrated the device’s ability to enable higher drug concentrations in tumor tissue while avoiding increased systemic toxicity.

The work was funded in part by the University Cancer Research Fund and the National Institutes of Health Director’s Pioneer Award Program. Researchers at UNC Lineberger, the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy, UNC School of Medicine, and UNC College of Arts and Sciences collaborated on the project. 8



Drs. Joe DeSimone and Jen Jen Yeh were among UNC Lineberger researchers involved in the research





Melissa Troester, PhD – Team Science at its Best

researching the different subtypes of cancer, and we have phenomenal resources like the Carolina Breast Cancer Study that can delve into the epidemiological factors,” she says. “It’s team science: transdisciplinary research at its best.”

Discovering a love for research

While studying chemistry on a pre-med track at Macalester College in Minnesota, Troester discovered she enjoyed the research process. “I loved the satisfaction that came from answering a question that had never been considered before and solving problems with methodology,” she recalls.

Her love of research led her to begin doctoral work in chemistry at University of Chicago. As her chemistry research began moving toward industrial applications, she realized that she wanted to refocus on the health sciences.

Troester’s journey from chemistry to public health and epidemiology took some time. She finished a master’s degree in chemistry and spent time working for public health-focused nonprofit organizations. This work sparked her interest in cancer and the environment. Volunteering with environmental education programs, she also discovered a love for community science education and the importance of scientific literacy.

In 1997, she came to UNC to pursue a PhD in environmental health with a focus on cancer. Relying heavily on her knowledge of chemistry, she studied environmental carcinogens in the body and how they interacted with DNA. By the time she finished her PhD, she felt she had just scratched the surface of biomarkers and cancer. She elected to do post-doctoral work with a focus on molecular biology to further the understanding of biomarkers and epidemiology research. Here, at the intersection of molecular biology and epidemiology, Troester started her independent research career.

In 2006, she started her first faculty appointment at University of Massachusetts. There she developed a research focus on the study of normal breast tissue and its response to different environmental exposures that could lead to

cancer. She seized the opportunity to come back to UNC in 2008, where she continues to study the epidemiology of breast cancer and how normal breast tissue interacts with a tumor to affect progression of the disease.

Troester explains that it’s important to understand normal breast tissue so that we can understand how the tissue changes in response to such factors as pregnancy, obesity, diet or environmental exposures. She uses the seed and soil hypothesis: the seed represents the cancer and the breast tissue is the soil. What makes good soil for the seed?

“We’re trying to understand the underlying biological mechanisms of breast cancer risk by studying how these factors change breast tissue before disease occurs,” says Troester. “If we only study cancers, but we don’t understand how healthy tissue responds to risk factors, we miss critical information.”

Teamwork outside the lab

Troester also values a team approach in her life outside the research lab. She and the students in her lab bring science into the community through science camps and expos in collaboration with UNC’s Morehead Planetarium. Together they create experiential opportunities for school children to learn about concepts like cell communication. She says, “It’s a great way for us all to get involved and spark interest in young scientists.”

The top priority in Troester’s life is her family. She and her husband have two daughters, ages seven and ten. The family enjoys camping trips to the mountains of North Carolina that include kayaking, hiking and lots of campfire cooking.

She took up running two years ago and finds it to be a good way to take care of herself while balancing the demands of work and family. When visiting the mountains, the family runs together in the Bear Run, an annual five mile race up Grandfather Mountain. She also enjoys running with colleagues in the Tar Heel 10 Miler, an annual race that supports UNC Lineberger. She notes with a smile, “Just as in science — it’s helpful to have the support of a group.”

UNC Lineberger member Melissa Troester, PhD, values a team approach in her work and her personal life. As associate professor of epidemiology at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health and co-director of the Center for Environmental Health Sciences Integrated Sciences Facility Core, Troester focuses her research on molecular biology and the epidemiology of breast cancer. She is a co-principal investigator for The UNC Breast Cancer and the Environment Research Program (BCERP), a five-year initiative to study how obesity and other factors may affect susceptibility to basal-like breast cancer.

Recently made co-leader of the cancer center’s Cancer Epidemiology Program, Troester’s work is an important part of UNC Lineberger’s interdisciplinary research on the causes of breast cancer and the translational research on strategies of prevention, treatment and cure.

“UNC is an incredibly vibrant environment for doing breast cancer research,” she says. She values the breadth of research being done at the cancer center and the supportive, collaborative atmosphere. “We have people

Pecot named one of only two ACS Mentored Research Scholar awardees

Chad Pecot, MD, assistant professor in hematology and oncology, has received a Mentored Research Scholar Award in Applied and Clinical Research from the American Cancer Society (ACS). Dr. Pecot is one of only two recipients in the United States to receive the award. The ACS award of \$729,000 over five years will support Pecot’s work on how small RNAs, called the miR-200 family, block cancer angiogenesis and metastasis.





UNC Lineberger members present at 2014 San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium

UNC Lineberger members Lisa Carey, MD, Chuck Perou, PhD, Hyman Muss, MD, Carey Anders, MD, and Katherine Hoadley, PhD presented at the 2014 San Antonio Breast Cancer

Symposium in December. The annual event provides physicians and researchers a platform to share state-of-the-art information on the experimental biology, etiology, prevention, diagnosis, and therapy of breast cancer and premalignant breast disease with an international audience of academic and private physicians and researchers.

Charles Perou, PhD, May Goldman Shaw Distinguished Professor of Molecular Oncology, was co-discussant on a poster examining how genes corresponding to the presence of B cells within breast tumors are highly enriched in some subtypes of breast cancer and the ways in which the presence of a reduced number of abundant B cell clones response predicted response to neoadjuvant chemotherapy in clinical trials of HER2+ or triple-negative breast tumors. Dr. Perou's advances in understanding the genomics of breast cancer have revised the clinical understanding of the disease.

Katherine Hoadley, PhD, research assistant professor, presented a plenary lecture on genomic analysis in clinical trials. Recently, Dr. Hoadley and Dr. Perou helped lead the largest, most diverse tumor genetic analysis ever conducted. This study revealed a new approach to classifying cancers and could have a profound impact on the future landscape of cancer diagnosis, treatment and drug development.

To read more, please visit bit.ly/18HLCVV



Hazel Nichols, PhD

Breast cancer prevention drug benefit varies among at-risk women

After weighing the risk of serious side effects with the benefits of a breast cancer prevention drug, a study led by UNC researchers found that the drug's benefits outweighed risks for most, but not all women.

The study's findings may help women and their doctors make decisions about who may get the most benefit out of taking the drug tamoxifen, which has been shown to have been adopted by only a small minority of women eligible to take it.

"It's important because it highlights that the estimated benefit is not the same for all women, and so women need to go and have a very specific conversation with their providers about what their health looks like at that time, and whether this is a reasonable option for them," said Hazel Nichols, PhD, an assistant professor of epidemiology in the University of North Carolina Gillings School of Public Health.

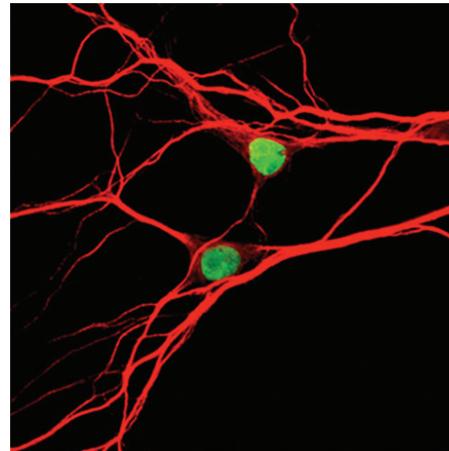
Nichols was the lead author of the study, which was published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*.

Nichols said that one of the biggest takeaways from the analysis she led is that it shows that there are tools that can help women and their doctors determine whether preventive drugs like tamoxifen are right for them.

To read more, please visit bit.ly/15sjT9J

Pinpointing chemo effect on brain cells

UNC Lineberger members have found for the first time a biochemical mechanism that could be a cause of "chemo brain" – the neurological side effects such as memory loss, confusion, difficulty thinking, and trouble concentrating that many cancer patients experience while on chemotherapy to treat tumors in other parts of the body.



Neurons expressing the Topoisomerase-1 gene

The research shows how the common chemotherapy drug topotecan can drastically suppress the expression of Topoisomerase-1, a gene that triggers the creation of proteins essential for normal brain function. Specifically, the drug tamps down the proteins that are necessary for neurons to communicate through synapses. However, the researchers found that the protein levels and synaptic communication return to normal when the drug is removed.

"Many in the cancer field are focused, as they should be, on whether a drug can kill a tumor, not what the cognitive side effects might be," Mark Zylka, PhD, associate professor of cell biology and physiology and co-senior author of the PNAS paper said. "But this study provides insights into potential serious side effects of drugs used to treat various forms of cancer. It is very good to know that at UNC we have a big effort to study patient-reported outcomes during therapy so that we can balance care for the whole person."

To read more, please visit bit.ly/1BPv9pN

Researchers identify two genes that trigger severest form of ovarian cancer

In the battle against ovarian cancer, UNC School of Medicine researchers have created the first mouse model of the worst form of the disease and found a potential route to better treatments and much-needed diagnostic screens.

Led by UNC Lineberger member Terry Magnuson, PhD, the Sarah Graham Kenan Professor and chair of the department of genetics, a team of UNC genetics researchers discovered how two genes interact to trigger cancer and then spur on its development.



Terry Magnuson, PhD

Not all mouse models of human diseases provide accurate depictions of the human condition. Magnuson's mouse model, though, is based on genetic mutations found in human cancer samples.

Mutations in two genes — ARID1A and PIK3CA — were previously unknown to cause cancer. "When ARID1A is less active than normal and PIK3CA is overactive," Magnuson said, "the result is ovarian clear cell carcinoma 100 percent of the time in our model."

The research also showed that a drug called BKM120, which suppresses PI3 kinases, directly inhibited tumor growth and significantly prolonged the lives of mice. The drug is currently being tested in human clinical trials for other forms of cancer.

To read more, please visit bit.ly/1zx07ZO



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Ronnie and Cyndi McNeill – Building a foundation for innovation



Cyndi and Ronnie McNeill

Ronnie and Cyndi McNeill of Wilmington are an important part of the history of UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center. Serving on the Board of Visitors since 1996, they have been instrumental in efforts to increase public awareness and advance the mission of the cancer center. Both are driven by a passion for giving back to their state and supporting cancer research.

Cyndi, who lost both of her parents to the disease says, “Cancer affects everyone, and it’s up to all of us to make a difference where we can.”

Ronnie’s perspective as a UNC Lineberger champion is informed by his years of experience in the health care business. He is Vice President

and Chief Financial Officer of Liberty Healthcare Services and also serves on the University of North Carolina – Wilmington Board of Trustees. He says he is “continually amazed at the exciting research going on at the cancer center.”

The McNeills have numerous friends and family members who have been patients at UNC Lineberger, and everyone has been impressed by the superb quality of care. “UNC Lineberger provides excellent direct patient care,” says Ronnie. “Over and over again, they demonstrate a combination of expertise with a compassionate, personal touch.”

The quality of care provided along with UNC Lineberger’s reputation as one of the most respected cancer centers in the country inspired the McNeills to make a gift to the cancer center. The UNC Lineberger Seed Grant program offered them the perfect vehicle to support the leading edge research they are passionate about.

Seed grants are funded by private donors and awarded through a rigorous competitive process administered by UNC Lineberger’s senior leadership. The funding provided by these grants supports novel, early stage research. The Ronald B. and Cynthia J. McNeill Fund for Cancer Research

will provide some of the vital funds for young investigators to collect initial data and position them to be more competitive in the quest for larger government and foundation grants. The McNeills say they are very pleased that the Seed Grant program offers a way to leverage their gift into further research grants.

“In today’s competitive funding environment, it’s important to help young scientists get started with innovative research,” says Ronnie. Cyndi shares in Ronnie’s excitement for helping bright, young investigators build a foundation for their promising cancer research saying, “We are hopeful that cures will be found.”

“We are grateful to the McNeills for making such an extraordinary gift,” said Ned Sharpless, MD, UNC Lineberger director. “How the McNeills have structured their gift – providing both endowed and expendable funds – allows the cancer center to dramatically improve our ability to award young scientists larger grants in the future. This then translates into exciting outcomes for our patients as well.”

The McNeills encourage others to join them in promoting UNC Lineberger across North Carolina and the rest of the country. “We have so many spectacular faculty members,” says Ronnie, “and the care and expertise are the best you’ll find anywhere.” Cyndi says, “We are so proud to support UNC Lineberger, and we look forward to many more years of service.” 8

To read more about the impact of seed grants on cancer research at UNC Lineberger, please download our 2014-2015 Seed Grant Report at UNCLineberger.org/seedgrant2015

Emily’s gifts



Emily McCann (left) helped patient Johanna Valera select a wig to wear while she is going through cancer treatment.

Eight-year-old Emily McCann of Apex came to the N.C. Cancer Hospital bearing gifts. She brought money to help meet the needs of pediatric cancer patients, but she also brought cheer, comfort and hope.

Inspired by her church to do something to make the world a better place, Emily decided to use her time and talent to earn money to buy wigs for children going through cancer treatment.

She earned money by doing odd jobs for family, friends and neighbors in exchange for donations. Many people made donations simply because they were so moved by Emily’s effort to serve others.

Just before the new year, Emily and her family visited the N.C. Cancer Hospital’s Patient and Family Resource Center (PFRC) and presented a check for \$1,685 to be used to purchase wigs for pediatric cancer patients. They decorated some wig boxes with cheerful stickers and made cards with good wishes for patients.

Johanna Valera, 18, came to the PFRC to pick out a wig during Emily’s visit. The two girls spent some time talking while Johanna tried on wigs. There were smiles all around as Emily helped Johanna select the perfect wig with beautiful long dark brown hair.

Tina Shaban, RN, manager of the PFRC explains, “Emily’s gift has allowed us to purchase some wigs with youthful styling and coloring that closely resemble the natural hair of our young patients.” Shaban added, “It was a real privilege to meet this young lady who worked so hard to help others in need.”

Emily encourages others to reach out in service to others saying, “If you have a feeling in your heart that you should help someone you should do it.” 8



Emily and her mother, Stephanie McCann, decorated wig boxes with stickers and happy wishes.

UNC Board of Trustees chair and cancer survivor Lowry Caudill headlines 28th Annual Lineberger Club event



Lowry Caudill, (bottom right) with his wife, Suzi Caudill and Dr. Juneko Grilley-Olson (top left) and Dr. Joel Tepper

Nearly 300 UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center supporters gathered at the Carolina Inn to hear the remarks of distinguished UNC alumnus Lowry Caudill, PhD, on January 24, 2015 during the 28th Annual Lineberger Club Lunch and Basketball Game.

Caudill, chair of the UNC Board of Trustees and of the University's Innovation Circle, was also co-president and co-founder of Magellan Laboratories, Incorporated, a Research Triangle Park based pharmaceutical development company. He received a B.S. in chemistry from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1979 and went on to earn a PhD in analytical chemistry from Indiana University in 1983. A true blue Tar Heel, Caudill has served the University he loves throughout his life as a leader, teacher, parent and ardent supporter.

When Caudill was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2009, he had the ability to go anywhere in the country for his care. He felt he had a duty to his wife Suzi and their three children to seek out the best treatment available. Using his years of experience as a scientist, he thoroughly researched his options and concluded that the best treatment in the country was available at UNC Lineberger with urologic oncologist Eric Wallen, MD.

Prostate cancer is a complex disease with a variety of treatment options. Wallen took the time to carefully explain and discuss the options with Caudill, and together they decided on the best course of treatment. In February 2010, Wallen performed a robotic assisted laparoscopic prostatectomy. Caudill had no complications from the surgery and has been cancer free for five years.

Caudill credits his successful outcome to skilled and compassionate physicians and UNC Lineberger's team approach to cancer care. Speaking of Wallen, Caudill said with emotion, "not only did he give me quality of life, he saved my life."

Caudill also spoke movingly of the care received by his mother, Jacqueline Lowry Caudill, at UNC Lineberger when she was diagnosed with a soft tissue sarcoma in 2011 at the age of 85. Speaking of her care team, which included

radiation oncologist Joel Tepper, MD, and medical oncologist Juneko Grilley-Olson, MD, Caudill said the amazing care they provided gave his mother three years with a high quality of life before she passed away in December 2014 at the age of 88.

"You gave my mom to us for three more years," he said. "Three years we didn't think we would have, and what a gift that was."

As chair of the Board of Trustees, Caudill has what he calls "the best seat in the house" to see all the great things that are happening at Carolina. He spoke with pride of the strides in translational research and its impact on the people of North Carolina noting that UNC Lineberger is leading that front. "As board chair and as an alum," he said, "I am very proud of what we are doing here. As someone who has benefited personally from it, I am forever grateful."

Each year, UNC Lineberger hosts the Lineberger Club Lunch and Basketball Game, inviting its most loyal and generous supporters. UNC Lineberger is grateful to Lee-Moore Capital Company, Dual Comfort Heating and Air Conditioning and Hardee's for making the 28th annual event possible. 

New Faces at UNC Lineberger



Morgan Pope has joined the UNC Lineberger team in the role of assistant director of major gifts. A UNC alumna, B.A. '09 and M.A.T. '11,

she spent the last few years working in the central development office at "that other school down the road." Morgan is thrilled to be returning to a lighter shade of blue and, even more so, she is grateful to be working in support of such an important mission. A native of Wilmington, NC, Morgan lives in the vibrant Durham community and enjoys adventures of all kinds—be it travel abroad, inside the pages of a good book, or within her own kitchen.



Laura Oleniacz has joined UNC Lineberger in the role of science communications manager. Laura is a 2008 graduate of UNC. Since

then, she's worked as a newspaper reporter, most recently as the higher education reporter at The Herald-Sun in Durham. The job took her to the Raleigh-Durham International Airport tarmac awaiting the landing of Air Force One to the kitchen of a burgeoning mobile doughnut business. She can't think of anything more exciting than working to help promote the groundbreaking research coming out of UNC Lineberger.



Anna Lee Croom has joined UNC Lineberger in the role of development and communications associate. She received her

undergraduate degree from Wingate University and a Master's degree from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. A native of Asheboro, Anna Lee is grateful to have joined such a wonderful External Affairs team. When she's not assisting with events and day to day operations at the cancer center, Anna Lee enjoys spending time with her family and friends and pup, Ralphie.



Kathryn Hunter has joined UNC Lineberger as a development and communications associate. She received her B.A. in Communication from

George Mason University and brings her experience in non-profit program coordinating to the External Affairs team. Originally from South Jersey, Kathryn lives in Apex, NC with her husband Jeff and their two young children. She is honored to be a part of the team here at Lineberger saying, "I can't think of a better environment to grow professionally while serving a mission to which I feel personally connected."

calendar of events

April

10th Spring Board of Visitor's Meeting

18th Tar Heel 10 Miler

September

18th Blue Ribbon Gala

For more information about these events and other UNC Lineberger news, visit www.unclineberger.org, or follow us on [f](#) [t](#)



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Statewide network established to support cancer survivors

UNC Lineberger's Comprehensive Cancer Support Program (CCSP) has received a grant from The Duke Endowment to fund the establishment of the NC Cancer Survivorship Provider Action Network (NC-CSPAN). This network will substantially improve access to survivorship care by creating a statewide workforce trained to implement cancer survivorship programs.

NC-CSPAN was conceived by Donald Rosenstein, MD, director of the CCSP. Rosenstein will lead the initiative to bring improved quality of life and positive behavior change for survivors and caregivers across the state.

"As the only public comprehensive cancer center in North Carolina, UNC Lineberger has an obligation to address the needs of underserved cancer survivors."



"Our response to the challenge of the growing needs of North Carolina cancer survivors is to create an enduring statewide network of health care professionals and educators who are trained to provide survivorship programs."
— Donald Rosenstein, MD, Director, UNC Comprehensive Cancer Support Program