

# INVESTING IN

# hope

Philanthropy in action at the UVA Cancer Center

Summer 2009  
Volume Three, Number One

## SUCCESS STORIES

### Caring for Our Youngest Patients

#### CHILDREN WITH CANCER

need special care. Their treatment options and strategies differ from those of adults. Children also have unique needs—such as activities to keep them entertained during boring treatments. At UVA, a team of specially trained pediatric oncologists sees 30-40 newly diagnosed children each year, and care for many more who are actively undergoing treatment.

Today, the overall survival rate for childhood cancer is 75 percent. For standard risk acute lymphoblastic leukemia, the most common childhood cancer, it's even higher. More work needs to be done, but there is real cause for hope.

"Thanks to innovative research and new treatment protocols,

survival rates have increased significantly," says Peter Waldron, M.D., acting chief, Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology. "It's wonderful to be part of that process."



**Dr. Kim Dunsmore, UVA pediatric oncologist**



**Drs. John Densmore, Michael Douvas, and Michael E. Williams are part of the Hematologic Malignancies Team at UVA.**

## From Research to Results

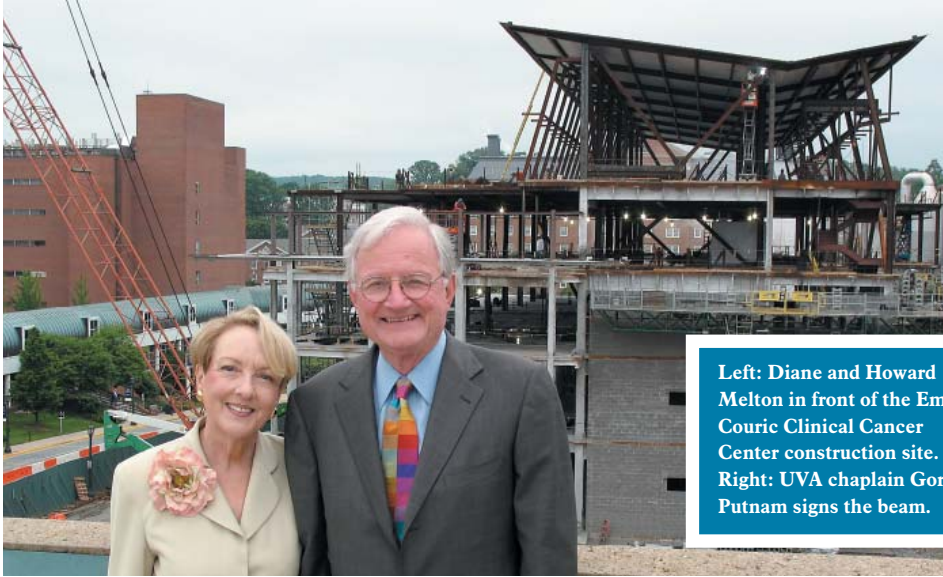
### *New Discoveries and Compassionate Care at UVA*

When she was diagnosed with stage III non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2007, Beth Dickey was surprised that she was referred to Michael E. Williams, M.D., at the UVA Cancer Center, almost 200 miles away from her home in Virginia Beach. It was a referral that changed her life.

"My experience with the UVA Cancer Center has been extraordinary," says Dickey. "From my first encounter, I felt a sense of comfort and understanding from Dr. Williams and the exceptional staff at UVA."

The Hematologic Malignancies Team at UVA has earned a national reputation for cutting-edge research and compassionate patient care, so much so that hospitals across the state refer their patients to UVA. Led by Williams, the multidisciplinary team—including John Densmore, M.D., Ph.D., Michael Douvas, M.D., and Kelly Davidson, M.D. — treats patients with a wide range of diseases, including leukemias, lymphomas, multiple myeloma, and other blood cancers.

CONTINUED ON BACK COVER



Left: Diane and Howard Melton in front of the Emily Couric Clinical Cancer Center construction site. Right: UVA chaplain Gordon Putnam signs the beam.



# Honoring the Support of Many

## *A Culture of Care at UVA Inspires Donors, Volunteers*

It has been a little over a year since the groundbreaking of the Emily Couric Clinical Cancer Center, and in that span of time, the area has begun to transform. Now, the building’s distinctive steel lines rise from the intersection of Jefferson Park Avenue and Lee Street, bringing the impressive 150,000-square-foot facility closer to reality each day.

Slated for completion in the spring of 2011, the Couric Center will provide state-of-the-art therapies and comprehensive cancer care to patients and their families. Yet, this new building would not be possible without the shared vision of countless dedicated supporters.

### A Personal Connection

Howard and Diane Melton of Arlington, Va., are two of these supporters. Their

connection to UVA is personal. In 1990, Howard Melton’s first wife, Betty Hughes Melton, was diagnosed with stage 4 ovarian cancer. She was referred to Peyton Taylor, M.D., associate medical director of the Cancer Center.

A strong bond developed between Taylor and the Meltons, one that continued after Betty Hughes passed away in 1999. It was through this friendship that Howard Melton learned of the emerging plans for a new center at UVA, presenting a unique and meaningful way to honor his late wife.

When Howard Melton remarried, he found a new partner in more ways than one. Together, Howard and Diane Melton mobilized their friends and family and raised funds to name a space in the Couric Center for Betty Hughes Melton.

Beyond their contributions to the new building, Howard Melton is a Cancer Center board member, and in 2008, Diane Melton joined the steering committee of the UVA Patients & Friends Research Fund. Since its inception in 2000, this group has raised more than \$3 million for cancer research at UVA.

“It’s a wonderfully dynamic and hardworking group,” she says, “and the research we help fund today holds the promise of new and more effective treatments for the future, treatments that could someday be used in the new Couric Center.”

### The Next Chapter

One piece of the future Couric Center already has special significance. This spring, staff, volunteers, and friends of the UVA Cancer Center were given the chance to sign one of the building’s steel beams before it was welded into its permanent home.

Howard Melton came to Charlottesville for the opportunity. Among the numerous notes of remembrance and hope adorning the 1,000-pound beam, he found space for his own. Like many, he sees the new building as the next chapter in the good work already underway by the UVA Cancer Center.

“In my experience, there’s a warmth at UVA that is hard to explain,” says Melton. “To the extent that I can help maintain that culture of care, I will continue to contribute in whatever way I can.”



Cancer Center benefactor Athena Angelus, Dr. Peyton Taylor, and Amanda Lane.

## UVA Nurse Honored for Excellence, Compassion

**IN HER NINE YEARS** at the Cancer Center, Amanda Lane, R.N., has cared for countless patients and earned the respect and admiration of her colleagues. This May, she received the 2009 Angelus Award at the Cancer Center’s annual Celebration of Life Reunion. Athena Angelus and Catherine Anninos created this award in 1999 to honor their parents, Millie and Alex Angelus. The award recognizes outstanding UVA nurses who care for patients in women’s oncology, and supports their continuing education.



## Racing for a Cure

Momentum is building for the 2009 Charlottesville Women's Four Miler, set to take place on Saturday, September 5. Last year, the event raised a record \$321,000 to support the UVA Cancer Center Breast Care Program. This year, organizers hope to surpass that goal by raising \$400,000 for the same worthy cause. To learn more, or find out how you can help, visit [www.womens4miler.com](http://www.womens4miler.com).

Last year, more than 2,500 women crossed the finish line at the Charlottesville Women's Four Miler.

### SPOTLIGHT EVENT

## Songs from the Heart

Charlottesville musician Terri Allard never hesitates to help out a good cause. So, when the opportunity arose to work with her friend Craig Slingluff, M.D., to raise money for melanoma research, she jumped at the chance. For Allard, it was personal: Her brother, Scott Allard, died from melanoma four years ago.

The end result was Melanoma Mayhem, a family field day event that drew more than 200 people for kickball, food, music, and games. Sponsored by the Patients & Friends Steering Committee, it also helped establish the Scott Allard Memorial Fund for Melanoma Research at UVA.

Allard remembers, "Back then, my mother had said, 'How can we make something good come out of this?' For us, this event is as much about raising awareness of melanoma as it is about raising funds."

"If Scott's story can help to educate people about the seriousness of melanoma and help raise funds to continue the important work that the Cancer Center has been doing, my family will be thrilled," Allard continues. "I can see the big grin on Scott's face right now."



Terri Allard with Dr. Craig Slingluff.

## IN THEIR

# own words

When UVA Board of Visitors member

Syd Dorsey was diagnosed with breast cancer in the fall of 2007, the doctor's words validated what she had feared most.

A year and a half earlier, she had told her gynecologist that something wasn't right; there was an unusual lump in her right breast.



UVA Board of Visitors member Syd Dorsey

"The results of the mammogram looked normal," she recalls, "and I accepted the answer I wanted to hear."

At her next visit, in 2007, the mass was still there, and she mentioned it again. This time, a bit more persistently. Soon after, she transferred her care to UVA, where she was diagnosed with stage 2 breast cancer.

"My team of doctors at the UVA Cancer Center was very helpful," says Dorsey. "They suggested new tests, answered challenging questions, and above all, kept a great sense of humor."

Luckily, her cancer was slow-growing and had not spread to the lymph nodes. Still, a complete mastectomy was in order.

Today, Dorsey is cancer-free and looking forward. She's committed to raising community awareness of the benefits of early detection, particularly among African Americans. This year, she's taking to the radio airwaves in a series of interviews with UVA physicians.

The message she shares is simple and direct. "We can't rely solely on our doctors to tell us what is going on with our bodies," she says. "We need to trust our own intuition and be our own advocates as well."

Dorsey will also be running in this year's Charlottesville Women's Four Miler, the largest all-women's race in Virginia, to support the Breast Care Program at UVA. Not a runner by nature, she confesses she's a bit nervous.

"Sure, I 'beat' cancer," she laughs, "but can I really run four miles?"

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## Help Fight Cancer by Eating Out!

Charlottesville restaurants are  
joining in the fight to support  
cutting-edge cancer research, donating 10% of their dinner proceeds on the days listed  
below to the Patients & Friends Research Fund at the UVA Cancer Center.

- **Wednesdays in August:** Fleurie
- **Wednesdays in September:** Petit Pois
- **Tuesdays in November:** Hamiltons' at First & Main

In addition, throughout October, Prince Michel Winery will donate 100% of the  
tasting fees from the Carter Mountain tasting room to Patients & Friends.

**Philanthropy never tasted so good!**

To find out more about these and other events, visit [www.uvapatientsandfriends.org](http://www.uvapatientsandfriends.org).

## From Research to Results

CONTINUED FROM COVER

### Building a Pathway from Lab to Bedside

Over the past decade, there has been an  
exponential growth in the understanding  
of these disorders.

“It’s an exciting time in the field  
of hematological malignancies,” says  
Michael Weber, Ph.D., director of the UVA  
Cancer Center. “Michael Williams, John  
Densmore, Michael Douvas, and Kelly  
Davidson are making groundbreaking  
discoveries that may well change the way  
cancer is treated in the future. Their work  
offers hope to our patients who are looking  
for new, better options in their fight  
against these deadly diseases.”

The key is collaboration—as a team,  
with scientists across the University,  
and with other medical institutions  
nationwide. Take the team’s own work on  
chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL).  
In collaboration with Ron Taylor, Ph.D.,  
Williams and Densmore noticed that  
Rituximab immunotherapy was having  
an unintended effect on the cancer cells  
in patients with CLL—standard doses  
were altering the cancer cells in a way that  
made them resistant to ongoing treatment.  
The team tested smaller, more frequent  
doses and found this approach increased

some patients’  
responses. In  
addition, lower  
doses—even when  
administered  
more frequently—  
reduced the side  
effects associated  
with standard  
dosing. This

approach is now entering clinical trials at  
UVA and multiple centers nationally.

Other projects within the team hold  
equal promise. Douvas is collaborating  
with John Bushweller, Ph.D., to develop  
a targeted therapy for a form of acute  
leukemia, a novel approach aimed at  
attacking cancer cells without harming  
nearby healthy cells. And, over the coming  
year, Densmore will further expand the  
number of clinical trials and treatment  
options available for patients fighting  
multiple myeloma.

### Care That Inspires

All this is good news for cancer patients  
and their families. For some, like Beth  
Dickey, it inspires them to help others.  
Over the past year, Dickey has hosted  
several events, each drawing hundreds of  
her friends and family, to raise awareness  
and funds to support lymphoma research  
at UVA.

“It is the most fulfilling and purposeful  
act, to know you are helping in the  
discovery of treatments that can and will  
save lives,” Dickey says.



UVA Cancer Center supporters  
Beth and Scott Dickey