Phil and Penny Knight and the campaign to end cancer as we know it
Nike co-founder Phil Knight and his wife, Penny, issued a historic challenge for cancer research at Oregon Health & Science University – if OHSU can raise $500 million by December 31, 2015 the Knights will donate an additional $500 million. If OHSU is able to meet this challenge, this gift would rank among the largest ever given by private philanthropists to advance a single program at a public institution. The Knights gave OHSU this opportunity because of their confidence in the institution and their desire to make a difference for cancer patients. As Phil Knight said, “Is there a higher calling than curing cancer?” The Knights recognize that now is the time to take the next big step toward stopping cancer in our lifetime.

To meet the Knight family’s challenge, OHSU will need help from everyone who cares about ending cancer as we know it. Individuals, families, corporations, government agencies and private foundations can help solve the most important problems in cancer today. The clock is ticking, the momentum is building, and the time to act is now.

On September 20, 2013 philanthropists Phil and Penny Knight thrilled a crowd of 400 guests gathered for the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute’s biennial gala by pledging $500 million in funds to kick-start a $1 billion cancer research initiative at OHSU. The surprise announcement sparked cheers and applause, and prompted an immediate and enthusiastic commitment from Brian Druker, M.D., the director of the Knight Cancer Institute, and OHSU President Joe Robertson, Jr., M.D., M.B.A., to raise the funds needed to earn the Knights’ gift. University leaders had been in ongoing talks with the Knights about the future of the cancer institute, which is guided by a powerful vision. “This is an opportunity to take an all-out stand against cancer that will change the world,” Robertson said.

“We want to cure more people. We want to end cancer as we know it. And we won’t give up until we’ve done that.”

– Brian Druker, M.D., Director, OHSU Knight Cancer Institute

“I know what it feels like when you’re told you have cancer. Brian Druker is in the business of providing hope to the hopeless. His job is to save lives, to discover new Gleevecs. Our job is to go out there and tell his story.”

– Rob Shick, cancer survivor
The vision that inspired the Knight family is a plan to make the most powerful life-saving impact on cancer care possible in the shortest amount of time. These efforts are organized around the biggest fundamental barrier to better patient outcomes – inadequate tools for detecting and diagnosing the disease early enough to save lives. The Knight Cancer Challenge will dedicate unprecedented resources and expertise to collaborative science. OHSU will build a team of the best minds in cancer science, focus them on the greatest opportunities for discovery, and empower them to pursue bold ideas.

Leading the charge is Brian Druker, M.D., director of OHSU’s Knight Cancer Institute and the pioneering scientist behind Gleevec, the first molecularly targeted cancer drug. Patients treated with Gleevec can live a normal lifespan without chemotherapy, radiation, bone marrow transplants, surgery or any of the other conventional cancer treatments. Gleevec proved that if we know what’s broken in cancer, at the molecular level, we can fix it.

The Knight Cancer Challenge tackles the next front in the war on cancer: detecting cancer at its earliest, most curable stages. The approach will be the same one used in the development of Gleevec for advanced cancer – if we know what’s causing cancer on the molecular level, we can find it before it becomes lethal.

The OHSU Knight Cancer Institute has a bold and powerful vision for transforming the way doctors detect and treat cancer. A $1 billion investment will make that vision a reality. Here’s how:

- **Bend the curve**: Seek faster, smarter ways to detect and treat cancer – before it becomes deadly.
- **Beat the clock**: Put unprecedented research resources behind this initiative so that it can make a significant impact in a decade. We can’t ask those living with cancer to be patient.
- **Build the team**: Assemble a collaborative, multidisciplinary team of cancer researchers, combining new recruits with top talent at OHSU to focus on improving early cancer detection, and fund their programs sufficiently to ensure they can devote their time to innovation.
- **Provide the tools**: Invest in the resources to accelerate discovery. Investments in equipment, shared research resources and computational biology will generate new discoveries.
“I think it’s important to know that the doctors Brian Druker has assembled here are the best in the country – the world. I can’t tell you how many phone calls I get from people who have been diagnosed with leukemia. I tell them I would go no other place.”

– Sophie Craighead, cancer survivor

Join the campaign to end cancer as we know it

Make a gift today –
• donate online at ohsu.edu/knightcancerchallenge
• send your donation in the enclosed envelope
• or call 503 228-1730 or 800 462-6608 to donate or to learn more about giving opportunities

Learn more about the science and the team behind the cancer breakthroughs taking place at the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute. Visit ohsuknightcancer.com.