Generous Gift Establishes James W. Mills Cancer Research Laboratories

A generous $5 million gift commitment from Lori and Jen-Hsun Huang has given a significant boost to the OHSU Cancer Institute's quest for new and better cancer treatments.

Announced in February, the Huangs' gift will establish the James W. Mills Cancer Research Laboratories in OHSU's Biomedical Research Building. There, institute Director Brian Druker, M.D., and colleagues will build on the success of Gleevec – the breakthrough that cemented OHSU's international reputation as leader in cancer research and drug development.

The Huangs reside in Los Altos Hills, Calif., where Jen-Hsun is CEO of NVIDIA, the world leader in visual computing technologies and Forbes magazine's Company of the Year for 2007. Their gift is in loving honor of Lori's father, James W. Mills, who has been successfully treated with Gleevec for chronic myelogenous leukemia since 2001.

"It is really difficult to overstate just how much this remarkable gift will advance our work," said Druker, who is also the institute's JELD-WEN Chair of Leukemia Research. "I believe this gift could bring us years closer to the discovery of important new treatments. We are truly grateful."

Scheduled to open in the fall, the new laboratories will become a core component of the institute's planned Center for Cancer Cell Signaling, where researchers will look for the secrets of cancer in the way cells communicate with one another. The OHSU Cancer Institute is now working to raise the $2.1 million remaining in its $10 million initiative to establish the center.

"Gleevec saved my dad's life," said Lori Huang. "We are grateful for the gift that Dr. Druker has given our family. We are convinced that Dr. Druker and his team hold the key to a better life for many other cancer patients."

"Completion of this lab space will mark a new era in Oregon's future and in the lives of cancer patients everywhere," said Rob Shick, co-chair with Dick Rubinstein of the drive to fund the Center for Cancer Cell Signaling. To learn how you can help, contact Rachel Hunsinger, director of development, at 503 494-8342, hunsinge@ohsu.edu.
In the past six months, we've had many noteworthy accomplishments at the OHSU Cancer Institute. New studies in prostate cancer, leukemia, and radiation medicine have yielded promising results. Recently established colorectal and ovarian cancer registries are developing comprehensive blood and tissue banks to improve cancer screening and accelerate research. And generous gifts from many friends are providing critical resources for cancer research and care initiatives. We are pleased to feature how some of these discoveries, activities, and gifts are moving us forward in our mission to eradicate cancer.

In late February at the OHSU Cancer Institute’s “Targeting Hope” gala, we proudly celebrated the innovations, discoveries, leadership, and philanthropy that are literally changing the face of cancer as we know it and bringing new hope to cancer patients worldwide. I was especially pleased to announce Lori and Jen-Hsun Huang’s incredible commitment of $5 million to the OHSU Cancer Institute to establish the James W. Mills Cancer Research Laboratories in our new, world-class Biomedical Research Building. Their deep dedication to our work—along with the support of many other friends, including patients and their families, physicians, nurses, staff, and community partners—is transforming cancer research and care in Oregon and beyond.

But, we know that there remains much work to defeat cancer. To reach our goals will take brilliant minds, dedicated staff, and friends like you who believe in and support our work. I hope you will enjoy reading about our most recent successes and that this will inspire you, as it does me, to do more.

Brian J. Druker, M.D.
Director, OHSU Cancer Institute
JELD-WEN Chair of Leukemia Research

Honorary Chairs Dick and Deanne Rubinstein with Eleanore Rubinstein (middle)
Since it opened at OHSU in 2006, the Colorectal Cancer Assessment and Risk Evaluation Clinic has provided patients with a comprehensive program of diagnosis, treatment and care. The clinic, created for patients concerned about their colorectal cancer risk, brings together specialists from medical genetics, oncology, gastroenterology, surgery, pathology, nutrition and social work.

Unlike the conventional method of diagnosis and treatment, in which a patient is referred from one specialist to another, CCARE patients are able to be seen and treated by several experts in one visit and in one location. Most importantly, the clinic allows the team of specialists to collaborate closely throughout the course of each patient’s case, from biopsy and diagnosis, to surgery and treatment, and finally through long-term care. These experts collaborate to provide specific recommendations tailored to each patient. If genetic testing is recommended a genetic specialist will help patients decide whether to get tested, interpret the results and discuss future health screening.

For Christine Bennett-Hanes, who was diagnosed 15 years ago with colorectal cancer at age 27, meeting with a genetic specialist helped her understand not only her own risk of another colorectal cancer occurrence but also her children’s risk of cancer as they grow older.

“It’s a relief to know I have a multidisciplinary team looking out for me. I feel really confident in them,” said Bennett-Hanes. “With kids I can’t leave them. Nothing can be wrong with my health. I have to stick around.”

There is no getting around the fact that colorectal cancer – the nation’s number two cancer killer – is closely linked to family history. But to help prevent that history from repeating itself in at-risk Oregon families, OHSU has launched the Oregon Colorectal Cancer Registry (OCCR).

Operated by OHSU’s Digestive Health Center and the Department of Surgery, the OCCR was established in 2006 to study the causes of colorectal cancer in families and to assist patients through the treatment, recovery and management of their disease. The goals are to promote the effective use of hereditary screening, provide education and promote research about the disease, which strikes 1,800 Oregonians every year.

“The registry will be one of the most comprehensive blood and tissue banks in Oregon,” said the program’s principal investigator Dan Herzig, M.D., an assistant professor of surgery and a member of the OHSU Cancer Institute. “It will be a giant library of colorectal cancer families that will provide a valuable resource for investigators looking for new reasons for why this cancer is passed from one generation to the next.”

Analyzing registry data and the latest genetic research in the field, OCCR experts assess whether certain family members are at increased risk of colorectal cancer and a number of related conditions.

For current OHSU colorectal cancer patients, OCCR staff members also coordinate care from OHSU Cancer Institute experts and other health professionals, including surgeons, oncologists, gastroenterologists, genetic counselors, specialized nurses, social workers and support care providers. If needed, the OCCR arranges hereditary screening with OHSU’s Colorectal Cancer Assessment and Risk Evaluation Clinic.

“Survival rates for colorectal cancer are extremely good if the disease is found early. Unfortunately, far too many people are not tested in time,” said Herzig. “That’s why we’ve been so encouraged by the high level of participation we’ve seen during our first year of operation – it means people are paying attention to their risks and doing something about it.”
Researchers at the OHSU Cancer Institute may have found a new tool to treat patients with chronic myeloid leukemia (CML). Gleevec, a targeted cancer pill, is the current gold standard treatment for this type of leukemia. Developed at OHSU by Brian Druker, M.D., in conjunction with Novartis Pharmaceuticals, Gleevec works by inhibiting the activity of an enzyme called Bcr-Abl that fuels CML cell production.

Although the blood levels of most patients with CML return to normal once they start taking Gleevec, a small percentage of patients develop resistance to the drug because the Bcr-Abl enzyme mutates. The second-line drugs Sprycel and Tasigna were developed as largely successful treatments for Gleevec-resistant patients, effectively stopping the mutated forms of this enzyme. However, one mutated form called T3151 is resistant to all three CML drugs and is a frequent cause of relapse – reducing the options available to patients with this mutation.

However, recent study results show an experimental drug known as SGX393 is effective against Gleevec-resistant chronic myeloid leukemia, including the T3151 mutant. Michael Deininger, M.D., Ph.D., head of the Hematologic Malignancies Section of the Division of Hematology and Medical Oncology, and his research team in the OHSU Cancer Institute have shown that SGX393, developed by SGX Pharmaceuticals, Inc., inhibits the T3151 mutant and most, but not all, other Gleevec-resistant mutants. This was shown to be true using laboratory models as well as leukemia cells from patients with CML.

“Because the resistance profile of SGX393 nicely complemented those of the other drugs and none of the drugs individually controlled all of the mutations, we extended our study to look at using a combination of the drugs. Remarkably, we found that the combination of SGX393 with either Sprycel or Tasigna completely suppressed resistance,” said Christopher Eide, research technician and co-author of the studies with fellow researchers Thomas O’Hare, Ph.D., Jeffrey Tyner, Ph.D., Amie Corbin, and Matthew Wong. The results of the study were published this spring in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

In late 2007 results of a recent six-year study for which Brian Druker, M.D., served as principal investigator, showed that the downward trend in the risk of disease progression for patients with chronic myeloid leukemia while on Gleevec has continued since year two of the study. The study results show that between years five and six, no patients progressed to an advanced phase of the disease. “This data continues to show how much Gleevec has completely changed the outlook for so many, many patients facing cancer,” said Druker.
When Dewey Burchell, 19, was being treated for testicular cancer, he really didn't relate to the pediatric cancer patients or the older cancer patients he saw at the hospital. The way he spends his time is different from younger and older patients.

This realization – that young men and women with cancer have different needs – is why a local group of twenty-somethings formed the Hugh Howard Houseen Memorial Foundation. The group had been friends with Hugh Housen, who died at age 25 of Ewings Sarcoma, a rare cancer.

“Hugh was in his 20s and working for Nike in the golf division. He was leading an active life and then all of a sudden he was being treated for cancer. He wished he could have been around people his own age – and had more to do while in the hospital. He was bored most of the time,” said Melinda Fidler of the HHH Foundation. She also works for Nike as an associate producer for digital commerce.

Searching for a way to help other young adults with cancer, they connected with the OHSU Cancer Institute Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Oncology Program and decided to help by raising money and donations for something this age group could use – new backpacks stuffed with items to use while in the hospital such as puzzle books, stationery, stamps, fleece hats with special pockets for their ear bud headphones, hand-held electronic games, warm socks and one thing Hugh always liked – Sour Patch Kids candy.

Fidler hopes patients find the packs useful and entertaining during their sometimes long hospital stays.

“Young adults with cancer have unique needs,” said Brandon Hayes-Lattin, M.D., medical director for the AYA Oncology Program. “These needs range from accessing quality cancer treatment, to addressing fertility concerns, to managing complex psychosocial situations with caregivers, parents, peers, children, school and work. These backpacks are one way of showing our young adult cancer patients that we realize their needs are different from other age groups’ concerns. Plus, these packs are pretty cool.”

The OHSU Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Oncology Program coordinates care, research, education and advocacy for those diagnosed with cancer between the ages of 15-40.
Gifts Accelerate Promising New Discoveries

Schnitzer Investment Corp. Funds New Research

To help accelerate the discovery process, Schnitzer Investment Corp. recently made a pledge of $250,000 over the next five years to support promising cancer research studies at the OHSU Cancer Institute. This generosity will make it possible for the institute to provide an annual $50,000 pilot project award to researchers exploring innovative ways to prevent, detect or treat cancer.

Pilot project awards give researchers the time and resources they need to demonstrate the scientific merits of their idea – and in so doing, greatly bolster their chances of securing National Institutes of Health funding down the road.

“Philanthropic investments such as this gift provide the vital seed money to get promising ideas off the ground and into position for major federal funding,” said OHSU Cancer Institute Director Brian Druker, M.D. “And in terms of maximizing the impact of a gift, funds designated to pilot projects can yield as much as a 20-fold return on investment once a project is up and running,” he said.

Research selected for pilot project funds will be both interdisciplinary and translational in nature, involving a collaboration of scientists from different perspectives through some combination of basic, clinical and population-based research. Pilot funds will provide support for shared scientific core resources, technical or research assistance, or other needs that further the aims of the project.

“This gift is an important step toward our goal of awarding pilot project support to researchers with promising ideas,” Druker said. “We are extremely grateful.” The institute will name one of several planned pilot project awards in recognition of the Schnitzer Investment Corp.

The Charitable Contributions Committee of Schnitzer Investment Corp. stated it was impressed by the cancer institute’s track record in leveraging pilot project gift s to secure much larger grants from other sources. The members felt this gift was a way to make a great impact, both on the OHSU Cancer Institute and on the cancer patients of our region and beyond.

Gift Underscores Importance of Early Stage Cancer Research

Visionary real-estate developer Robert K. Gerding is a man who has come full circle. With Bob and Diana Gerdings’ recent gift of $250,000 to support the work of Tomasz Beer, M.D., this biochemist-turned-businessman has reconnected with the scientific world he left years ago, when his career path took a dramatic twist.

The Gerdings’ gift will support innovative early-stage prostate cancer research directed by Beer, OHSU’s Grover C. Bagby Chair of Prostate Cancer Research. Although inspired by the excellent medical care Bob received as a patient of Beer, this gift more broadly reflects his undiminished belief in the power of science.

Known primarily as the man behind some of the area’s most prominent development projects, Bob originally set out for a career in the laboratory. A graduate of Portland’s Lincoln High School, he earned a trio of scientific degrees
from the University of Oregon, including a Ph.D. in biochemistry. He then began what would become extended postdoctoral fellowships at the University of Oregon and Purdue University.

At the time, with the Vietnam War in full swing, federal research funding for up-and-coming academics like Bob was hard to come by. Feeling stymied, he ultimately returned to Oregon. Opportunities for biochemistry academics were few and far between in Portland, but his connections led him to a job directing the clinical chemistry and toxicology laboratories at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital. After six or seven successful years there, he was faced with a choice that would profoundly alter his career path.

Pharmaceutical giant SmithKline approached Bob with a golden opportunity to run its Western United States Clinical Laboratory Division. The good news: the position would place him in line for a rapid climb up the corporate ladder. The bad news: if successful, he would probably have to spend the rest of his working life in Philadelphia, far removed from his beloved Oregon outdoor pursuits. Realizing this wasn't the right move, Bob opted instead to focus on building a national consulting business. For a period, he specialized in the design, construction and management of private clinical laboratories. This led to a transition into the commercial real estate market. With his background in the sciences, Bob gained a reputation as an early proponent of sustainably designed development. The rest is Portland history.

Bob said his ability to change careers came from his educational experience. “Ph.D. programs teach you how to learn,” he said. “You often spend two or three years on your own conducting your academic thesis research and learning how to work independently. You lose your fear of trying new things. Many people with advanced degrees may go through two or three careers.”

Through the many changes in Bob’s professional life, he did not lose his passion for the importance of basic research, and the need for society to invest in science. “We must do more to encourage our best scientists to explore their brightest ideas and pursue their boldest vision. I believe that’s the only way we can hope to defeat complex diseases like cancer.”

By supporting Beer’s research – one of the nation’s most robust prostate cancer research programs – Bob is doing what he believes to be his part in bridging today’s wide funding gap for novel biomedical research. “Especially during times like these, when the federal government has other spending priorities, private individuals have an important role to play in supporting vital early-stage research,” he said. But his gift was equally motivated by his high esteem for Beer as a clinician.

“I feel privileged to know Tom, and to have had the benefit of his skill, creativity and big heart,” he said. “I cannot thank him enough for his hard and successful work in making life better for his patients and people everywhere affected by prostate cancer.”

“Bob and Diana’s gift will be put to very good use,” said Beer, who was appointed to the Bagby endowed chair last fall. “This type of support makes a world of difference in what we do, and I couldn’t be more grateful.”
Benchmade Knife Company Raises Support for Breast Health Education

It’s pink. It’s pocket-sized. And it has a purpose. Designed especially for women, the new Pink Griptilian folding knife is the ideal tool for gardening, camping, hiking, fishing – and supporting breast health education.

Thanks to a generous commitment from the knife’s manufacturer, Oregon City-based Benchmade Knife Company, the OHSU Cancer Institute’s Breast Health Education Program will receive 10 percent of the wholesale profits from worldwide sales of this one-of-a-kind knife.

The partnership is expected to generate more than $10,000 per year during the knife’s product lifespan, helping to provide medical students, residents and practicing clinicians with standardized training in the early detection of palpable breast tumors. The program also helps educate the community on all related breast cancer issues.

The $90 knife is approximately 6.5 inches long and weighs 2.56 ounces, suiting it well for a wide range of uses. And its pink color signifies that it’s a product with a purpose – preventing deaths from breast cancer.

“Private dollars from corporations like Benchmade are essential in supporting what we do,” said Program Director Elizabeth Steiner, M.D. “As the need for support of this essential program continues to grow, we are very excited and optimistic about the sponsorship efforts from Benchmade. After all, early detection of breast cancer is the key to early treatment and survival.”

As Oregon’s only academic health center OHSU is a natural leader in the effort to train professionals in breast cancer detection. In 2007 Oregon became the first state in the nation to require insurance companies to cover annual breast examinations. Additionally, the OHSU Cancer Institute operates the only MammaCare training center west of the Mississippi River.

“This knife is the right tool for the right cause,” said Benchmade co-founder Roberta de Asis. “From research to patient care to professional education, the OHSU Cancer Institute is doing some great things to fight breast cancer, and we are proud to be their partner in the effort to promote breast health.”

New Oregon Ovarian Cancer Registry

The Gynecologic Oncology Division at OHSU announces that the new Oregon Ovarian Cancer Registry (OOCR) is now open for enrollment for individuals who have had ovarian cancer or who come from a family with an increased risk for ovarian cancer. The OOCR intends to increase patient education and provide an opportunity for original research. Identifying and enrolling families at increased risk for ovarian cancer will improve the use of appropriate screening guidelines and referrals to genetic counseling. As the OOCR blood and tissue bank grows, so will the opportunity for clinical and translational research. This registry is one of few in the country dedicated to familial ovarian cancer. For information or to refer a patient, call 503 418-4522.
New Predictor of Prostate Cancer Recurrence Identified

A biomarker has been found that may improve the ability to predict if a man’s prostate cancer will return after surgical removal. An OHSU Cancer Institute research team found that men whose tumors showed silencing of a certain gene called CDH13 had a five-fold increased risk of prostate cancer recurrence compared with men whose tumors showed no silencing of this gene. In normal cells, this gene is active, but in some cancer cells it may be turned off, which leads to a propensity for spreading, according to Joshi Alumkal, M.D., assistant professor of medicine (hematology & medical oncology).

“In the clinic, those of us who care for patients with prostate cancer look at the pathology report and PSA blood test to determine how a patient will do after surgery and how aggressive their tumors might be,” said Alumkal. “However, these tools are not perfect. We were searching for a biomarker to identify patients whom these clinical predictors currently misclassify as being at low risk for recurrence.”

Alumkal said finding such a predictor may help improve upon existing tools and enable physicians to make more accurate predictions about tumor behavior down the road. This work will appear in the journal Urology, and Alumkal is currently validating these findings on a separate group of patients in collaboration with the University of Washington, with which OHSU shares the National Cancer Institute Prostate Cancer SPORE grant.

Researcher Develops Test for Targeted Therapy in Acute Myeloid Leukemia

Reducing to four days what once took months, an OHSU Cancer Institute researcher has developed a faster way to determine the right targeted therapies for patients with acute myeloid leukemia (AML). Created by Jeff Tyner, Ph.D., a post-doctoral fellow in the division of hematology and medical oncology, the RAPID functional assay uses a patient’s own cells to identify the exact tyrosine kinase proteins contributing to his or her cancer. “If you know what protein is driving the cancer, you have the ability to target that protein and stop it,” Tyner said. “With this knowledge it may be possible to match targeted drugs with appropriate patients.”

Tyner said this work is novel because the assay was performed directly on patient samples as opposed to research specimens. “It gets us one step closer to the clinic and personalized medicine,” he said. The breakthrough will enable researchers to more quickly compile a database of mutant genes that cause cancer, which will allow better diagnosis in the future using DNA sequencing technology. It is also possible that this technology could be adapted for diagnostic clinical use.

Chemo Holidays Found Safe for Men with Advanced Prostate Cancer

Taking temporary breaks from chemotherapy can make life easier for some prostate cancer patients without jeopardizing their health. A recent OHSU study published in the journal Cancer shows that men with metastatic androgen-independent prostate cancer can safely take a break from docetaxel. This intravenous chemotherapy drug is the gold standard treatment for this form of cancer, but as with any chemotherapy drug it can cause severe side effects. This study was the first to show that “vacations” from therapy do not lead to treatment resistance.

“We wanted to see if we could improve the quality of life for these patients by giving them time away from chemotherapy and possibly extend the time their cancer is controlled,” said principal investigator Tomasz Beer, M.D., director of the OHSU Cancer Institute Prostate Cancer Research Program.

Hormone Fuels Rare Blood Cancer Mutation

An effective treatment for polycythemia vera – a rare but deadly red-blood-cell cancer – has proven elusive to scientists. However, an OHSU Cancer Institute researcher has discovered that a particular hormone is responsible for driving an enzyme to cause this cancer. Working with a mutation in the JAK2 enzyme, principal investigator Thomas Bumm, M.D., Ph.D., a hematology & medical oncology post-doctoral fellow, has found that this enzyme is dependent on the hormone TNF-alpha to grow and cause polycythemia vera.

There are existing drugs that target TNF-alpha in the treatment of autoimmune and inflammatory diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, but they have not yet been used for cancer patients. Bumm said this recent finding may lead to a new way to fight this cancer.
Researcher Helps Develop Initiatives for Cancer Survivors

Kerri Winters-Stone, Ph.D., has been appointed to a panel of experts assigned to develop physical activity and well-being initiatives that address the specific wants, needs and interests of cancer survivors. The panel is the result of a multiyear partnership between YMCA of the USA and the Lance Armstrong Foundation.

“This initiative will make it possible for cancer survivors to take some control over their disease through physical activity,” said Winters-Stone, an exercise physiologist in the OHSU School of Nursing.

Position Impacts Radiation in Pelvic Cancer Patients

When pelvic cancer patients are treated with radiation therapy, they are traditionally positioned on their backs during treatment. However, OHSU Cancer Institute researchers have reported greater precision and reduced toxicity by positioning patients face-down on a specialized table configured to accommodate the abdomen, according to Martin Fuss, M.D., adjunct professor of radiation oncology and director of the Program in Image-Guided Radiation Therapy.

Because patients return for multiple treatments, being able to exactly reproduce the position of the patient allows more precision of radiation administration, which reduces toxicity. “This finding runs contrary to the common perception that the supine (on-the-back) position is more stable and convenient and therefore causes less variation in day-to-day setups,” Fuss said.

Guided Radiation Prevents Damage to Organs

OHSU Cancer Institute researchers have found that highly targeted techniques for radiation therapy can prevent rectal damage in most prostate cancer patients, an historically common side effect of radiation. A recent study found no rectal damage in nearly 98 percent of 231 participants receiving a combination of intensity-modulated radiation and seed marker-based image-guided radiation therapies for prostate cancer.

According to Todd Scarbrough, M.D., principal investigator and associate professor of radiation medicine, this treatment combination allows for millimeter targeting accuracy of the tumor. “If these outcomes can be reproduced by others, then this combination of radiation therapies will yield some of the lowest toxicity rates of any definitive treatments for prostate cancer,” Scarbrough said.

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, April 30, 7 - 8 p.m.
The Latest Advances in the Detection and Treatment of Colon and Rectal Cancer
Seminar by Daniel Herzig, M.D., FACS, assistant professor, associate program director, OHSU Program for Colorectal Cancer. Cost: $5. OHSU Center for Women’s Health, Peter O. Kohler Pavilion, 7th floor. Visit www.ohsuhealth.com/healthytalks to register.

Wednesday, May 7, 7 - 8 p.m.
Prostate Cancer Prevention and Detection – Who Is At Risk and Why

Wednesday, May 14, 7 - 8 p.m.
Prostate Cancer Treatment – New Procedures Offer More Options and Improved Success Rates

Thursday, May 15, 8:30 a.m.
GIST Cancer Discussion and Breakfast
Presentation by Drs. Brian Druker, Chris Corless, and Mike Heinrich, followed by lab tour. OHSU Cancer Institute. Contact Lisa Nolen at 503 494-7071 or cinews@ohsu.edu.

Monday and Tuesday, July 28-29
Northwest Cancer Summit 2008, Portland, Ore.
Hosted by Cancer Care Resources, the first day is for cancer survivors, second day for business and government leaders. Sponsored by the OHSU Cancer Institute. Visit www.cancercareresources.org.

Saturday, Aug. 2
4th Annual Sherie Hildreth Ovarian Cancer (SHOC) Foundation Empowerment Walk, Gladstone, Ore.

Monday, Sept. 29
Prostate Cancer Challenge, Edgewater Golf and Country Club
Net proceeds from this golf event support prostate cancer research at the OHSU Cancer Institute. Contact Sally Lynch at 503 639-4577.
If the family that plays together really does stay together, then there’s no doubt that Don and Anne Nixon are in it for the long haul. These on-the-go 70-somethings from Oysterville, Wash., share interests ranging from writing (currently working on a novel) to travel (three trips to Europe) to exercise (they are die-hard golfers) and even to flying (both are licensed pilots). They have something else in common too: both are loyal former OHSU patients and together have made a long-term commitment to OHSU through a charitable gift annuity.

Established in 2005, their gift provides vital support for the OHSU Cancer Institute’s research and clinical programs. But charitable gift annuities have an added advantage that appealed to Don and Anne and numerous other OHSU supporters. These planned gifts allow donors to fulfill their philanthropic goals while retaining a lifetime source of partially tax-free income. And when the tax advantages are taken into account, these annuities can yield favorable returns compared to conventional investments.

Apart from the financial benefits, the gift carried extra meaning for Anne, a colorectal cancer survivor and former employee of what would one day evolve into the OHSU Cancer Institute. During the early 60s, she managed OHSU’s “tumor clinic” under the direction of legendary OHSU physicians William Fletcher, M.D., and William Krippaehne, M.D. There she had the opportunity to participate in OHSU’s new chemo clinic. What she saw made a lasting impression. “The program was much smaller then than it is today, of course, but the care there was wonderful – so good, in fact, I told myself if anything ever happened to me, I’d come to OHSU.”

Years later, in 2001, that “something” did happen. Anne learned she had colorectal cancer. Unsatisfied with her care options on the rural Washington coast, she returned to OHSU for her treatment and is today cancer-free. Despite her clean bill of health, she continues to visit her oncologist, Rodney Pommier, M.D., every year just to make sure everything is still on track. “He told me I didn’t have to come back unless I wanted to,” she says. “Well, I want to!”

The Nixons are pleased with their decision to support OHSU through a charitable gift annuity. “The tax advantages are great for us, and the money is really doing something for OHSU.” For information about charitable gift annuities or other ways to make a planned gift to the institute, call 503 228-1730.
Only one place in Oregon is recognized worldwide in the fight against cancer.

The OHSU Cancer Institute is the only cancer center in Oregon designated by the National Cancer Institute—a honor earned only by the nation’s top cancer centers. We’ve helped revolutionize cancer care and saved lives around the world with discoveries like Gleevec®, the first therapy to stop cancer at the molecular level. At OHSU, more than 200 doctors, scientists and health professionals are dedicated to making cancer a thing of the past.

OHSU offers the most comprehensive cancer care in Oregon, with the latest treatments, technologies and clinical trials. Isn’t that what you would want for you and your family? See for yourself. Ask your doctor about OHSU or call today for an appointment.

503 494-1122
OHSUhealth.com/onlyone
Most health plans give you easy access to OHSU. Make sure your plan, too.

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