

The Emory Winship

REPORT



EMORY

WINSHIP
CANCER
INSTITUTE

Spring 2008 The Emory Winship Cancer Institute cancer.emory.edu

New Hematology and Medical Oncology Department

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EMORY WINSHIP CANCER INSTITUTE
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Welcome to the Emory Winship Report. Thank you for taking time to read about the people who make our work here so special. The Emory Winship Cancer Institute is comprised of wonderful and talented people at all levels our organization. We are here because of our belief that we can make a real difference in the battle against cancer, and as you will see in this issue, we are making progress. Emory Winship is the first medical facility in Georgia to have earned a prestigious Specialized Project of Research Excellence grant from the National Cancer Institute. This grant, which will bring \$12.5 million to Emory, is a collaborative scientific research project that is designed to hasten the process of moving discovery from the laboratory to the clinic for the benefit of our patients.

Once again, we all appreciate your interest in the Emory Winship Cancer Institute.

Sincerely,

Brian Lelyand-Jones, MD, PhD

*Executive Director, Emory Winship Cancer Institute
Associate Vice President, Woodruff Health Sciences Center*

Events

For a complete listing of events, including monthly support groups and physician meetings, please visit www.cancer.emory.edu/news or call 404-778-5452.

MAY 15 - Jean Sindab Town Hall

Hosted by Emory Winship and Emory Crawford Long Hospital, panel discussion will focus on the broad topic of breast health issues for African-American women, and highlight triple negative breast cancer disease and treatment options. Open to community members. Attendance is free. 6:30 – 8:30 PM at Emory Crawford Long Hospital. Please Rsvp to HealthConnection at (404) 778-7777

***MAY 16 - Jean Sindab Triple-Negative Breast Cancer Symposium**

An accredited symposium open to community physicians and researchers. Discussions will focus on triple negative breast cancer. The Sindab Symposium is made possible by a gift from Kathelen and Dan Amos in honor of Aflac's African-American Female managers and employees. 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM at the Grand Hyatt Atlanta, Buckhead. Call (404) 778-5452 to register.

JUNE 21 - Celebration of Living

This special day celebrates and recognizes the daily life of cancer patients, survivors, their families and their friends. Admission is free and includes breakfast, lunch, and entertainment. Registration is requested at (404) 778-7777. 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM at the JW Marriott Buckhead

*** JULY 27–31, 2008 - Future Directions in Hematology and Oncology**

This accredited, four-day interactive, educational program provides physicians a comprehensive review into the mechanisms of disease for patients with cancer or blood disorders. Call (404) 778-5452 for more details or to register. Kiawah Island, South Carolina

***Physician Conference**

Emory Announces New Hematology and Medical Oncology Department

Fadlo R. Khuri, MD, Named Chair

The Emory University School of Medicine has established Hematology and Medical Oncology as its newest department and has named Fadlo R. Khuri, MD, as department chair. Dr. Khuri will also hold the Roberto C. Goizueta Chair for Cancer Research.

Brian Leyland-Jones, MD, PhD, director of Emory's Winship Cancer Institute, notes that this is a timely and important step for the Cancer Institute. "The newly created Department of Hematology and Medical Oncology is vital to Emory Winship's development as a true comprehensive cancer center," he says. "And Dr. Khuri is the natural choice to serve in this important position. Dr. Khuri is internationally recognized as a leader for his work in improving therapies for tobacco-related cancers. In addition, he has earned tremendous respect among faculty, staff and our patients for his leadership, his devotion to patient care and his incredible work ethic."

"There are tremendous opportunities for collaboration throughout the Woodruff Health Sciences Center," says Dr. Thomas Lawley, dean of the Emory University School of Medicine. "Establishing this department contributes to an environment in which faculty from throughout Emory can maximize collaboration and build the vertical and horizontal strength required of a matrix cancer center."

"Over the past several years, we have seen dynamic growth within Emory Winship," says Dr. Leyland-Jones. "Now is the time for a new phase of strategic development, a time to grow into an collaborative organization comprised of clinicians and scientists in Hematology and Medical Oncology, which will be led by Dr. Khuri; Radiation Oncology, led by Dr. Walter Curran; Cancer Control and Population Sciences, led by Dr. Jack Mandel; Pediatric Hematology and Oncology, led by Dr. William Woods; and Surgical Oncology, led by Dr. Charles Staley."

As chair of the new department, Dr. Khuri



Fadlo R. Khuri, MD

will oversee clinical and basic research as well as the delivery of oncology clinical services at each facility within Emory Healthcare. Prior to accepting the chairmanship of the newly created department, Dr. Khuri served as Emory Winship's deputy director of clinical and translational research and as section head of hematology and oncology.

"We have been very successful in earning research grant funding from the National Cancer Institute as well as from the National Institutes of Health, Department of Defense and numerous philanthropic foundations," says Dr. Khuri. "I am fortunate to lead this department, which is staffed at all levels with dedicated and talented professionals."

Since joining Emory Winship as Associate Director for Clinical and Translational Research, Dr. Khuri has helped lead the sub-

stantial increase in federal cancer funding at Emory. He has recruited more than 25 faculty to Emory's hematology and medical oncology section, and has played an integral role in recruiting leading research and clinical faculty to Emory. Dr. Khuri serves as principal investigator of a \$7.9 million P01 grant in lung cancer and as co-principal investigator on the \$12.5 million Specialized Project of Research Excellence (SPORE) grant in head and neck cancer, both from the National Cancer Institute.

Dr. Khuri also notes the importance of the Roberto C. Goizueta Chair for Cancer Research, which was initiated as an endowed cancer research fund in 1997. "We will work to extend Mr. Goizueta's vision for creating sustainable change and long-term impact for our community and beyond. We are honored to be able to play a role in implementing that vision through high-impact research into lung and aerodigestive cancers."

Dr. Khuri, a Georgia Cancer Coalition Distinguished Scholar, joined Emory in 2002 from the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including being listed among America's Top Doctors and the Marquis Who's Who in the World, and he has been elected into the prestigious American Society for Clinical Investigation. Dr. Khuri serves on the editorial boards of seven journals and has published more than 150 peer-reviewed articles and editorials in elite journals including *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, and the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

Break out those travelin' shoes...

Nancy Leiffer has had eight surgeries and more than 100 chemotherapy treatments in her four-year battle against metastatic colon cancer, but she's not letting that stop her from doing what she's always enjoyed.

She and her husband, Gary, have been to Europe three times in six months. She continues to work in her garden, switching to growing flowers in pots and hiring out the heavy yard work. She exercises at least twice a week with a local cancer wellness group, and enjoys cooking for family and friends.

"My attitude has been that I can't stop living. I don't have time for cancer. I've got too many things to do," Leiffer said. She schedules her travels around her chemotherapy treatments at Emory Winship Cancer Institute.

"Travel has always been my passion. It's something my husband and I love to do together. When we travel, we're not on the go all day like in the past, and we take naps before we go to dinner. We still have a wonderful time," she said.

Leiffer was just 46 when she experienced a sharp pain in her abdomen and felt a hard mass. She was admitted to the hospital and underwent a weeklong regimen of tests. A colonoscopy revealed a tumor the size of a baseball.

"Because I was so young, I hadn't been screened for colon cancer. It was totally unexpected," she said.



Nancy and her husband Gary in Greece



Nancy Leiffer

"Nancy's positive attitude, courageous spirit and determination contributed to the success of her treatment," said Dr. Kauh.

By early 2004, the cancer had spread to her liver and left lung. Surgery followed and in January 2005, Dr. John Kauh, assistant professor of hematology and medical oncology at Winship, began working with Mrs. Leiffer on her treatment.

At first, the chemotherapy drugs didn't work. Finally, she started on Erbitux, a drug that shrank her tumors and made it possible to remove the rest of the liver tumor. "After six months of chemo directly into the liver, we declared victory," she said.

The next battle was new tumors in both lungs. Then, while she was off chemotherapy in preparation for surgery, the cancer spread to her lymph nodes. She started chemotherapy again in January 2007.

A PET scan in June 2007 showed that she is cancer free. She's continuing chemotherapy to take care of any cancer cells that might not have shown up on the scan.

"When the doctors found the right chemotherapy drug that worked for me, the tumors started shrinking. We are living in a good time when very effective drugs have become available and we are seeing great results," she said.

"I've found that if I eat properly, get a good night's sleep and stay active, I'm not nearly as fatigued during the day, even when I'm on chemo," she said. Leiffer advises other cancer patients to be active participants in their treatment. "Doctors do the absolute best they can, but patients need to do their part to get better," she added.

"I do get tired and sometimes get sick, but I still enjoy being with family and friends and going on family vacations. I know I have cancer, and I have to take care of myself. Once you stop living, you might as well quit," Leiffer said.

Walter Curran Named Emory School of Medicine Radiation Oncology Chair and Emory Winship Cancer Institute Chief Medical Officer



**Walter
Curran,
MD**

THOMAS LAWLEY, MD, dean of the Emory University School of Medicine, and Brian Leyland-Jones, MD, PhD, director of the Emory Winship Cancer Institute, announced the appointment of Walter Curran, MD, FACR, as professor and chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology in the Emory School of Medicine and as chief medical officer of the Emory Winship Cancer Institute.

Dr. Curran joins Emory from the Jefferson Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, where he served

as professor and chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology at Jefferson Medical College and clinical director for the Kimmel Cancer Center, also at Jefferson.

“Dr. Curran is internationally respected for his work in radiation oncology and clinical trial development,” says Dr. Leyland-Jones. “He recognizes the tremendous potential that is here at this stage of Winship’s growth, and we are fortunate to have him join us. Dr. Curran’s recruitment is a major boost to Winship’s ongoing drive to National Cancer Institute Comprehensive Cancer Center designation.”

Dr. Curran currently is the Group Chairman and Principal Investigator of the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group, a National Cancer Institute-funded international, multi-institutional cooperative group dedicated to advancing patient treatment and care through cooperative clinical trials and research. He will continue to serve in this role after assuming his responsibilities at Emory.

Dr. Curran is a Fellow in the American College of Radiology and holds honorary memberships in the European Society of Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology and the Canadian Association of Radiation Oncology. In 2006, he was named the leading radiation oncologist/cancer researcher in a peer survey by the journal *Medical Imaging*.

“I am looking forward to working with the tremendous faculty and staff at Emory,” says Dr. Curran. “This is an exciting time in the field of cancer research and treatment, and Emory is leading the way in many areas of research and patient care.”

Dr. Curran graduated cum laude from Dartmouth College, received his MD degree from the Medical College of Georgia, and is a Board Certified Radiation Oncologist. Dr. Curran completed his residency in the Department of Radiation Therapy at the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center and his internship in internal medicine at Presbyterian Medical Center in Philadelphia.

Lung Cancer Specialist Joins Emory Winship Faculty



**Suresh
Ramalingam,
MD**

BRIAN LEYLAND-JONES, MD, PhD, director of the Emory Winship Cancer Institute, and Fadlo Khuri, MD, chair of hematology and medical oncology, announced the appointment of Suresh Ramalingam, MD, as director of the translational thoracic malignancies program, and acting assistant professor of hematology and medical oncology at Emory Winship.

Dr. Ramalingam comes to Emory from the

University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. He specializes in lung cancer, esophageal cancer and other thoracic cancers and is actively involved in the scientific development of novel anti-cancer treatment agents.

Dr. Ramalingam serves as the principal investigator on several early phase clinical trials in lung cancers, many of which are sponsored by the National Cancer Institute. He is widely published in peer-reviewed scientific journals and serves as a reviewer for a number of medical journals. Dr. Ramalingam is a member of the Thoracic Core Committee of the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group and serves on the editorial board of the journal *Clinical Lung Cancer*.

Dr. Ramalingam is a recipient of the prestigious “Clinical Research Career Development Award,” which is presented by the American Society of Clinical Oncology. He has

been selected as one of “The Best Doctors in America” and has received numerous awards of excellence such as The University of Pittsburgh Leadership Award for Excellence in Clinical Trials Program Development.

“Emory Winship Cancer Institute is strongly positioned to move to the next level as a national leader in top quality cancer care and research,” says Dr. Ramalingam. “I am excited to join Emory at this critical juncture. Working closely with the team of highly accomplished researchers at Emory, we will provide top-notch cancer care for patients and offer innovative, cutting-edge clinical trials for the treatment of lung cancer.”

Emory Winship Cancer Institute Earns \$12.5 Million Grant for Head and Neck Cancer Research

The National Cancer Institute has awarded a five-year, \$12.5 million Specialized Program of Research Excellence grant in head and neck cancer to Emory Winship Cancer Institute. This is the first SPORE grant ever received in the state of Georgia.

SPORE grants are large, multidisciplinary federal grants that fund scientific research aimed at bringing new laboratory findings quickly to the clinic. They are highly competitive grants and are sought after by the most prestigious research and medical facilities across the country.

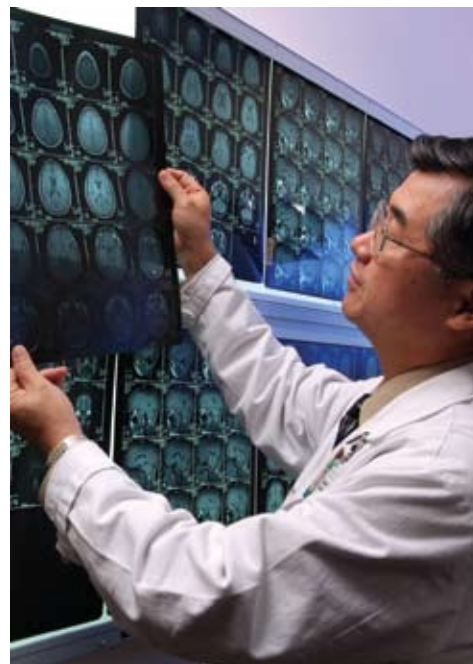
“Head and neck cancer can be a devastating disease,” says Dong Moon Shin, MD, professor of hematology and medical oncology at Emory Winship and principal investigator of the grant. “Our focus on this grant is to facilitate, critically review and rapidly move new discoveries to patients. Our goal is to decrease the morbidity, suffering, disability and death caused by this disease. Dr. Shin is also a Georgia Cancer Coalition Distinguished Cancer Scholar.

“This is an extremely important grant for Emory University and for Georgia,” says Brian Leyland-Jones, MD, PhD, director of

Emory Winship and a Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholar. “This SPORE grant is a testament to Emory Winship’s position as a national leader in research and patient care, particularly in aerodigestive tract cancers.” Last year, Emory Winship earned a \$7.9 million NCI grant in lung cancer research.

The Emory Winship SPORE program will consist of four major translational research projects:

- [Chemoprevention with Green Tea Polyphenon](#)
- [Targeting Death Receptors-Mediated Apoptosis for Head and Neck Cancers](#)
- [Development of Novel Curcumin Analogs for the Treatment of Head and Neck Cancer](#)
- [Biodegradable Nanoparticle Formulated Taxol for Targeted Therapy of Head and Neck Cancer](#)



Dr. Dong Shin, principal investigator

Fadlo Khuri, MD, chair of hematology and medical oncology at Emory Winship and co-principal investigator of the grant, says, “We earned this grant thanks to the exceptional science that will be conducted here, however, it’s important to note that the NCI places great value on the strong commitment of support including space, recruitment, shared resources and matching funds from the Emory University School of Medicine, Emory’s Woodruff Health Sciences Center, the Georgia Cancer Coalition and the Georgia Research Alliance. This grant truly represents a team effort.”

Reserve your Healing Garden Paver

The Vaughn-Jordan Healing Garden features a commemorative stone plaza with engraved pavers that feature the names of donors, loved ones and friends. These pavers can be donated in honor of a special person, in memory of loved ones, or in lieu of gifts for special occasions.

Pavers are available in three different sizes at \$100, \$250, and \$500 gift levels. Please contact the Development Office at (404) 778-5175 or visit us online at <http://www.cancer.emory.edu/support/healinggarden.php> to reserve your paver before our next annual installation in Spring 2008.

Emory Surgeon Provides Skin Cancer Education to DeKalb County Middle Schools

When Keith Delman, MD, a surgical oncologist, is not in the operating room, he can often be found in front of classrooms full of 11- and 12-year-old children, talking about the dangers of sun exposure and how to prevent skin cancer.

Dr. Delman, assistant professor of surgical oncology at Emory's Winship Cancer Institute, is a melanoma specialist. He is working with DeKalb County Schools on an innovative skin cancer education program aimed at middle school students. "We've reviewed a lot of literature that tells us this age group is most likely to actually listen and take it to heart," says Dr. Delman. "We would like to expand it statewide."

"Dr. Delman does a terrific job talking with these kids," says Caryn Gartner, department chair for health and physical education at Peachtree Charter Middle School. "It makes a difference that he is talking from personal experience about what he sees in the operating room."

According to the American Cancer Society, skin cancer is the most common of all cancer types and the number of skin cancer cases has been on the rise for the past few decades. Currently, more than one million skin cancers are diagnosed each year in the United States. That's more than cancers of the prostate, breast, lung, colon, uterus, ovaries, and pancreas combined.

"The median age for melanoma is approximately 50 years old," says Dr. Delman. "We know, however, that 80% of sun exposure and associated skin damage occurs before the age of 18. "We are working closely with DeKalb

County Schools to educate middle school children about these facts."

Dr. Delman makes a point of exposing myths about skin cancer so these students get the facts. He notes that anyone — regardless of skin color — can get skin cancer, pointing out that this year, nationwide, 3,000 children under the age of 21 will be diagnosed with melanoma, and that 21% of those diagnosed will be African American, Latino, Asian or Native American.

New Deputy Director of Emory Winship Cancer Center Institute

Theresa Wicklin Gillespie, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Surgery, Emory School of Medicine has been appointed Deputy Director for Administration for the Emory Winship Cancer Institute.



As Deputy Director for Administration, Dr. Gillespie will oversee all administrative areas of the EWCI. She will continue to work with Dr. Leyland-Jones and EWCI leadership on Emory University's

pursuit of NCI cancer center designation.

Dr. Gillespie, who also serves as Director of Health Services Research at the Atlanta Veterans Affairs Medical Center, has led the Cancer Center Support Grant (P30) submission. "Winship is immensely indebted to Dr. Gillespie in taking on this absolutely critical P30 role," said Dr. Brian Leyland-Jones. "We are fortunate that someone of Dr. Gillespie's stature and breadth of knowledge of both science and administrative issues will be part of our senior leadership team."

Dr. Gillespie previously served Winship as



Patient Assistance Fund Helps Patients in Need

THANKS TO THE INTEREST and support of many donors, Emory Winship's Patient Assistance Fund received more private donations this year than in the previous five years combined.

The Social Services department at Emory Winship created the Patient Assistance Fund to provide financial assistance to patients and their families during the course of cancer treatment. The goal of the Fund is to provide these families with short-term assistance, including costs of medication, utilities, transportation, housing, groceries, and parking.

To learn about qualifications for assistance, please contact the Social Services department at (404) 778-5933. To make a donation to the Patient Assistance Fund, please call (404) 778-5175.

Director of Clinical Research from 1986-2000 and was Associate Director of the Winship Cancer Center from 1990-1996. She holds a BA in Communications and MA in Nursing and PhD in Educational Studies/Higher Education Administration and Research Methodologies from Emory University. She is nationally recognized for her work in oncology nursing and was awarded the 2005 Bench to Bedside Distinguished Lectureship sponsored by the NCI, AACR, and Oncology Nursing Society.

Dr. Gillespie has developed and teaches graduate and undergraduate courses and mentors student research in the Schools of Medicine, Nursing, and Public Health. Dr. Gillespie was the recipient of an NCI Career Transition Award (K22) in 2000 and has served as principal investigator for studies funded by the NCI, CDC, ACS, national and regional Veterans Affairs, and National Blood Foundation. Her research has focused on patient and clinician decision-making regarding treatment options, particularly informed decision-making for clinical trials, risk communications, health disparities, and outcomes research.

Multiple Myeloma Research Consortium (MMRC) Honors Emory University and Dr. Sagar Lonial with 2007 Center of the Year Award

The Multiple Myeloma Research Consortium (MMRC) announced that it has awarded Emory University and Sagar Lonial, MD, associate professor at Emory Winship Cancer Institute, with the 2007 MMRC Center of the Year Award.

The MMRC Center of the Year Award recognizes the outstanding efforts of an MMRC Member Institution and its respective principal investigator in advancing the field of multiple myeloma research and drug development.

The MMRC is the only research model of its kind that brings together 13 leading academic institutions to accelerate the development of novel and combination treatments for multiple myeloma, an incurable cancer of the plasma cell. The MMRC supports groundbreaking clinical trials, helping to facilitate the effective transfer of research from the laboratory to the clinic.

“The MMRC is a model of innovation and advocacy,” said Dr. Lonial. “I am deeply honored to have received this recognition on behalf of Emory, the Winship Cancer Institute, and the colleagues with whom I work.

At Emory, we are encouraged to develop translational research initiatives that will lead to better patient care. The MMRC plays a vital leadership role in supporting these initiatives and the translation of science into the clinic.”

“As a results-driven organization, the MMRC holds its Member Institutions to the highest degree of accountability in reaching research milestones to accelerate drug development,” said MMRC Founder and CEO Kathy Giusti. “Under Dr. Lonial’s leadership, Emory Winship has opened eight clinical trials to date and has consistently met or exceeded patient enrollment forecasts. This honor is truly a testament to Dr. Lonial, whose tenacity and compassion for patients continues to drive Emory University’s success within the Consortium and serves as a model for other MMRC Member Institutions.”



Dr. Sagar Lonial, Associate Professor of Hematology and Oncology at Emory University’s Winship Cancer Institute, accepts the 2007 MMRC Center of the Year Award from MMRC Founder and CEO Kathy Giusti.



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