



# FRIENDS OF THE UH CANCER CENTER

## *Dr. Randall Holcombe Takes Over as Director in Early October*

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The Friends of the UH Cancer Center extends a warm welcome to Dr. Randall F. Holcombe as he begins work as the Center's director on October 3. An expert in colon cancer and other gastrointestinal malignancies, he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Cancer Center.

One of Dr. Holcombe's top priorities will be to lead the efforts to renew the Cancer Center's application for the P30 Cancer Center Support Grant for National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated centers which is due in 2017. He's well equipped to lead this effort, having secured an initial NCI designation last year for the Mount Sinai Health Systems' Tisch Cancer Institute in New York where he served as deputy director. He also held positions as chief medical officer for cancer and director of ambulatory oncology services at Mount Sinai Hospital. He is a researcher as well as a clinician, serving as principal investigator on more than 140 clinical trials.



**Dr. Randall F. Holcombe**  
*Director of the University of Hawaii  
Cancer Center*

In speaking of the role of philanthropy in the success of the Cancer Center, Dr. Holcombe was quoted in the July 2, 2016 issue of The Honolulu Star-Advertiser as saying that philanthropic support will be important in the short term and also in the long term for the center. "Honestly, philanthropic support is absolutely critical to the mission of all cancer research centers, because it's possible to maintain research programs just through extramural grant funding, but it's exceedingly difficult to initiate new programs and develop new areas of research without philanthropic support ... That's one of the responsibilities of a cancer center director: to be able to share the message of what's going on within the center and share the excitement that can enable philanthropic support."

## President's Message

By *Adelia Chung*

Dear Friends,

We celebrated when we heard the news that Dr. Randall Holcombe, a renowned colon cancer expert with an impressive list of accomplishments, had accepted the employment offer from the Board of Regents in early June. Like many of you, we're now looking forward to welcoming him as he begins his new job as director of the UH Cancer Center on October 3.

Dr. Holcombe's appointment marks a new beginning in the life of our Cancer Center and the beginning of an effort by the Friends to invite you to partner with us. Since our first board meeting more than 35 years ago (we were named the Pacific Foundation for Cancer Research back then), we have been committed to supporting and promoting the efforts of the Cancer Center, and – just as importantly – responding to and fulfilling the Cancer Center's need for private funds to supplement federal and state resources.

We need the support of community members like you so the Cancer Center can reach its full potential. Your support can take the form of a monetary donation or a donation of your time as an advocate for the Center.

"Friends With Benefits" is our new initiative which provides exciting "perks" attached to each donor level. The details are included in this newsletter.

Please join us in our efforts to support the lifesaving work of advancing cures for cancer.



*Adelia C. Chung, CLU, ChFC*  
Board President (2016-2018)

## UH Cancer Center Board of Directors

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## *We Need New Friends*

*By Lori Phillips*

We would like to invite you to join us in supporting the work of the UH Cancer Center. There are wonderful benefits in being a FRIEND:

**Friend (\$100 annually): Everyone needs a Friend!**

You'll receive the Friends' newsletter, *Ho'ola*, with your name included in the donor list plus invitations to "An Education in Cancer Research," a quarterly lecture series focused on current cancer research and findings

**Good Friend (\$250 annually): There is nothing like a good Friend**

You'll receive all of the above plus a private tour of the Cancer Center

**Very Good Friend (\$500 annually): We all know Friends are invaluable**

You'll receive all of the above plus lunch with a researcher from your area of interest

**Best Friend (\$1,000 annually): Best Friends are Forever!**

You'll receive all the above plus an invitation to a dinner with Dr. Holcombe

**Best Friends With a Nobel Laureate (\$5,000 annually)**

You'll receive all of the above plus an invitation to a cocktail and dinner party held with visiting cancer Nobel laureates and an invitation to attend the associated three-day "Weinman Symposium on Cancer"

As a Friend – in addition to supporting the life-saving work of advancing cures for cancer – you'll be supporting programs to educate individuals in our community on cancer prevention.

## *Two Easy Ways to Show Your Aloha for the UH Cancer Center*



Please look for the Friends of the University of Hawaii Cancer Center's name on the list of organizations participating in the 2016 Aloha United Way campaign and the "Give Aloha, Foodland's Annual Community Matching Gifts Program."

For more than 90 years the Aloha United Way (AUW) has

supported charities who deliver valuable service to our community. It closely monitors the delivery and financial management of the agencies on their donor choice list to ensure they are efficient and effective. The Friends of the UH Cancer Center is an approved charity. Please consider designating the

Friends as your charity.

And, during the entire month of September, use your Maika'i Card at Foodland to make a donation to the Friends (#77583) and a portion of your donation will be matched by Foodland and the Western Union Foundation. The donations will be accepted at checkout counters at all Foodland, Sack N Save and Foodland Farms stores statewide.

Please consider making a donation through either or both of these opportunities. Your generosity will be much appreciated and will help fund research and programs in cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment at the UH Cancer Center.





Ethel Azama

It's nearly impossible to find someone who hasn't been touched by cancer.

So it was in 1979 when Ethel Azama went to the Cancer Research Center to volunteer.

Ethel was a friend of neurosurgeon Dr. Stanley Batkin who did research at the Center. Dr. Batkin had removed a brain tumor from her five-year-old son, Joby. From that day forward, Ethel felt she owed him for saving her son's life.

Dr. Batkin told Ethel in October of that year that he couldn't find anyone to donate the \$300 he needed to sustain his research project until January of the next year, when new funding was available. According to an early source, Ethel, together with Deloris Hill, who worked at the Center doing public relations and fundraising, tried to obtain the money through "traditional bureaucratic sources" to no avail. Ethel, who worked part-time at KKUA radio, convinced her boss to sponsor a Halloween party at Castle Park with the proceeds earmarked to fund Dr. Batkin's research. Their efforts raised \$900.

Ethel and Deloris talked about establishing a friends group and researched the possibility with other cancer research

centers, knowing it would be nearly impossible to establish such an organization within a state system.

The women's next step was to establish an independent 501C3 non-profit organization to support local, innovative cancer research programs. The first board meeting was held in June, 1981. *That was the beginning of the Pacific Foundation for Cancer Research, next called the Friends of the Cancer Research Center of Hawaii and now the Friends of the UH Cancer Center.*

The Foundation's first major contribution to the Center was a Tumor Colony Counter purchased in 1984. Since then, the Friends have made many major equipment donations.

Since the Friends early days,

the organization has worked tirelessly to support and promote the efforts of the Cancer Center, responding to the Center's need for private funds to supplement federal, state and other resources. Many of the board members have – like Ethel Azama – had a family member with cancer or have had cancer themselves.

## *How Well Do You Know Your Friends?*



Engelbert Humperdinck



Mel Torme (Standing)

If you enjoy trivia, here's some from the Friends' newsletter archives:

Among those listed as Major Individual Contributors in 1984 was none other than Engelbert Humperdinck. Do you remember Mel Torme? He appeared in a benefit concert for the Cancer Center at the Neal Blaisdell Concert Hall in May of 1983. Tickets were \$18.50 and \$22.50 and complimentary champagne was served during intermission.



## *Partners in Philanthropy: The Friends and the UH Foundation*

With almost 60 years of experience in major gifts fundraising between the two of them, Rebecca Tseng Smith and her husband Tom Smith Tseng recently joined the UH Foundation.

Rebecca and Tom both serve as vice presidents for development and campaign co-directors. In addition, Rebecca supports the health sciences programs system-wide, including the John A. Burns School of Medicine, the UH Cancer Center and the Schools of Nursing and Pharmacy.

"We think it makes sense to think about how the health sciences schools and programs are connected, or could be connected, in a way that the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts. Generous supporters think this way, so we should too," said Rebecca.

She shared her vision for how the Foundation can work together with the Friends.

"With the coming of the new Center director, Dr. Randy Holcombe, I see an opportunity to bring some new wind under our sails. It will be a time for us to make some new Friends and reconnect with old Friends to encourage new gifts. I believe people will want to support our new leader."

As a cancer survivor, it means a lot to Rebecca to personally seek support for cancer research with the ultimate goal of finding cures and also lessening the suffering of people living with cancer.

"Private philanthropy is critically important to the Cancer Center. With what we've recently been through in terms of funding issues, we all feel a lot of responsibility to put our focus and attention on the Cancer Center. This is especially true as the new director comes on board; we want to support him strongly, right from the beginning."

Rebecca has high praise for the Cancer Center. "I'm very excited about what the future holds for the UH Cancer Center. It stands out as a center for excellence at UH and an example of how research is changing the lives of people in Hawaii. It is exciting to talk with people about what's going on at the Kakaako campus both in the Cancer Center and in the John A. Burns School of Medicine right next door."

"The Foundation wants to be good at listening to the passions of the donors and learning about what they care deeply about. Donors want to use their philanthropy to make the world a better place so we need to be able to facilitate those connections. Donors have a key role to play in furthering excellence at the Center."



*Rebecca Tseng Smith*

## *One Ticket at a Time*

To encourage enrollment in clinical trials and ease the transportation burden on neighbor island patients, the Friends of the UH Cancer Center funds a program called Tickets for a Cure.

Earl Stoner, past president of the Friends, was instrumental in getting the program up and running in 2012 by working with Hawaiian Airlines and UHCC's Clinical Trial Office. A longtime Maui resident and loyal supporter of the Cancer Center, Earl knows firsthand the extra burden on neighbor island residents who need to come to Honolulu for treatment or follow up.

Dr. Charles J. Rosser, UH Cancer Center director of the Clinical and Translational Research Program and a practicing urologic oncologist, recounted how he recently recommended that one of his patients enroll in a clinical trial. The patient was hesitant, especially when he heard that he would be required to make trips to Honolulu from the Big Island. Dr. Rosser told his patient about Tickets for a Cure and immediately, his patient agreed to participate in the trial.

Since the program's inception, nearly 150 tickets have been given to neighbor island



patients with the combined support of Hawaiian Airlines and the Friends.

Clinical trials are not only a key part of furthering cancer research but, more importantly, provide patients with state-of-the-art treatment and care for the particular type of cancer for which they are undergoing care.

As strong proponents of the Cancer Center's work, the Friends are pleased to help ease the burden on patients and their families and to see more patients participating in clinical trials because of Tickets for a Cure.

For more information on Tickets for a Cure, please contact **Tim Coughlin** at the UH Cancer Center Clinical Trials Office, [tcoughlin@cchawaii.edu](mailto:tcoughlin@cchawaii.edu)

# Turning the Tide of Public Opinion

By Diane Ono

In 2014, local newspaper headlines and television news stories cited mounting financial woes and reports of mismanagement at the new Cancer Center facility in Kakaako. Stories of groundbreaking research were drowned out by this negative chatter.

redefined our role as being primarily advocates of the Center.

Over several months, the groundwork was laid by calling on Friends such as Honolulu Star-Advertiser publisher Dennis Francis, a longtime board member, and others in the news media to help tell

sions with various legislators, and testifying before UH's Board of Regents.

We spoke with one voice and had a consistent message.

In March, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser ran a front-page three-part series on the Cancer Center. The articles showed the many ways in which the Center touches the lives of people in Hawaii with its clinical trials, the unique research on natural products, as well as the population studies being done based on our unique multi-ethnic mix.

While the series was running, Hawaii News Now did a Sunrise session at the Cancer Center. As the sun came up, everyone could see the state-of-the-art facility as the backdrop for the interesting stories of the researchers and others touched by cancer in our community. The tide of public opinion had started to shift as people became aware of the important work being done at the Cancer Center.

Well-known and respected people from the community began stepping forward in support of the Cancer Center. John Fink, general manager of KFVE, said in a "Think

About It" piece that he too was throwing his hat in the ring in support of the Cancer Center. Former UH Foundation trustee Beadie Dawson and longtime UH Athletics booster Don Murphy co-signed an op-ed piece in the Star-Advertiser. The graphic artist responsible for the UH logo, Kurt Osaki, stepped forward to tell his story about how the Cancer Center's research discovered his genetic predisposition to colon cancer.

Prior to these efforts, the public had mostly heard negative criticism about the Cancer Center and now the media was bringing forth a more informed view. The Friends played a key role in helping to raise public awareness about why the Cancer Center is important to us, the people who live here in Hawaii.

While the 2016 Hawaii State Legislature did not provide the needed funding for the Center, the Friends are confident that with Dr. Randall Holcombe as the new director and the more positive public opinion of the Center, they will be successful in helping to gain the Legislature's support in the years ahead.



*Diane T. Ono, Esquire*

*Board Member*

As advocates for the Cancer Center for over 30 years, the Friends of the UH Cancer Center asked ourselves in early 2015 the hard question of whether the Center was indeed worth supporting. Negative public opinion had affected even the Friends. After much soul searching, we resolved to redouble our efforts to continue to support the Cancer Center and we also

the Cancer Center's story.

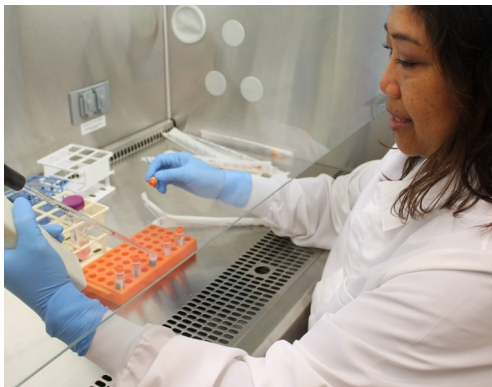
The fruits of this behind-the-scenes work paid off in spades as the 2016 legislative session quickly approached. Starting in January 2016 (before the Hawaii State Legislature convened), the Friends began formulating our message. We began our work as advocates by presenting testimony to the Legislature, meeting in informational ses-



# Where We Are, Where We're Going

By Earl Stoner

The Friends elected in 2015 to concentrate on advocacy for the UH Cancer Center. While we will continue to support educational programs, quality research and



provide transportation for clinical trial patients, we believe we can have the most impact on the Center in our role as advocates.

It's an important role and one that we feel will lead to the Center's continued growth and recognition. Distinguished by our National Cancer Institute designation (we're one of 69 such centers in the nation), we're confident that the UH Cancer Center can be one of the top research centers in the nation.

## Here's why:

**Our location and our population:** We have two factors that give us a unique edge in research for cancer care and treatment: our physical location in the middle of the Pacific Rim and our multi-ethnic population.

Our physical location provides natural resources that are found only in Hawaii.

Research involving these resources has great potential to result in products for treatment and possible cures. Our multi-ethnic population has been the focus of a study for the past two decades and much of the detail gleaned from that study has directed research on specific cancers in distinct ethnic populations. As this research expands, it has the potential to impact greater populations outside

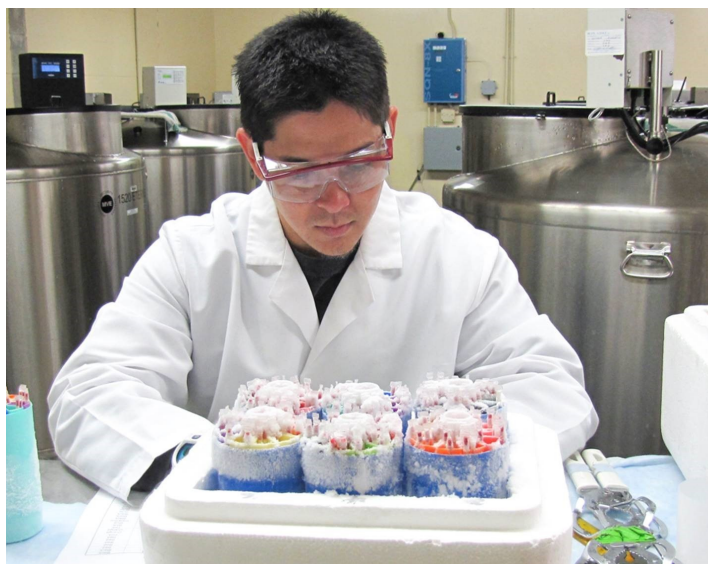
Hawaii. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) likes this.

**Our NCI designation:** Our NCI designation (first acquired in 1996) is not only prestigious due to its exclusivity but comes with financial support plus the opportunity to expand that support through affiliated entities. The designation is not automatically renewed and re-

quires stringent attention to a protocol of quality research.

**Our facility and our consortium:** We have a state-of-the-art facility with great laboratories, support work areas, offices and world-class personnel. We're fortunate that our consortium relationship with The Queen's Medical Center, Hawaii Pacific Health, Kuakini Medical Center and the John A. Burns School of Medicine, local oncologists and cancer care providers negates the need and expense of having to construct and operate our own hospital.

**Our NCI-experienced director:** Within a month, we'll have a new director, Dr. Randall Holcombe, whose recent role has been as deputy director of the NCI-designated Tisch Cancer Institute which is part of the Mount Sinai Health System in New York.



Earl Stoner

Board Member

**Our community:** We have a Legislature, Board of Regents and University administration that supported the construction of our new and much-needed facility in 2010 with the development of a bond issue and funding support for its operation. The purpose of this move was to support the expansion of the Hawaii economy through the growing of a bioscience segment. This has worked with the Cancer Center injecting over \$50 million dollars annually into our local economy. Additionally, we have been joined by third-party researchers and treatment providers who recognize the benefits of such areas of cancer research as immunotherapy.

Essentially, we have a Cancer Center that the people of Hawaii can be proud of and one that has the potential to quickly expand the services that can most benefit cancer patients and their families locally but also have a great impact on many other cancer patients far from our Island shores.

## Friends of the University of Hawaii Cancer Center

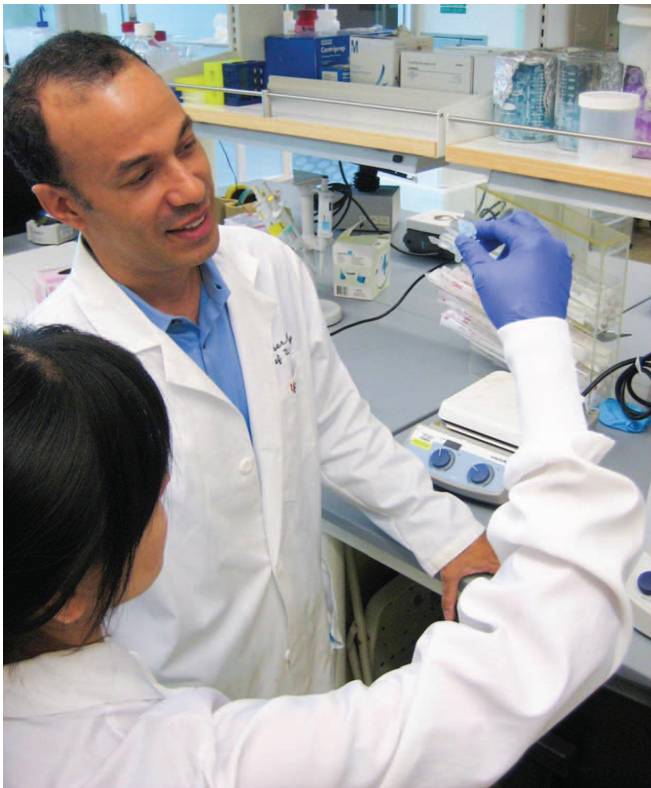
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### *About the Friends of the UH Cancer Center*



The Friends of the University of Hawaii Cancer Center is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to support and promote the efforts of the University of Hawaii Cancer Center. Our goal is to generate community support for the Cancer Center in its efforts to find cures for cancer, to educate the people of Hawaii on cancer prevention and to improve the quality of life of those diagnosed with cancer. To fulfill our mission and goal, the Friends is actively involved in advocacy by bringing awareness to our community of the excellent and unique research taking place at the Center. We are seeking broad-based support from the community and welcome those who would like to join our effort in our “Friends With Benefits” program. If you are interested in assisting in our advocacy and support for the University of Hawaii Cancer Center, please contact Adelia Chung at [adelia@spectrumhawaii.com](mailto:adelia@spectrumhawaii.com).