The Sylvester family, for whom the institution is named, announced a dramatic second-generation gift the night of the kick-off. Jayne S. Malfitano and her sister, Laura Cameron, pledged an additional $11.5 million in philanthropic support, as their father—Harcourt Sylvester, Jr.—looked on. Harcourt Sylvester’s original gift of $27.5 million 18 years ago, which was followed by a second gift of $5 million, made the creation of UM/Sylvester possible.

The Sylvester gift augments the tremendous support of the Papanicolaou Corps for Cancer Research, which in 2003 pledged $10 million to be paid over the next five years. The Pap Corps has supported cancer research at the University of Miami School of Medicine since it was founded in 1952. In addition, the Braman Family Breast Cancer Institute at UM/Sylvester was established with a $5 million gift from Norman and Irma Braman.

UM/Sylvester Director W. Jarrard Goodwin, M.D., F.A.C.S., shared his vision for UM/Sylvester’s ranking among the best cancer centers in the nation. Scientific Director Joseph D. Rosenblatt, M.D., reported on the cadre of new physicians and scientists recruited in the past 18 months and enumerated the extraordinary research at UM/Sylvester, South Florida’s only university-based cancer center. John J. Clarkson, M.D., senior vice president for medical affairs and dean of the University of Miami School of Medicine, shared the importance of UM/Sylvester to the University and the entire South Florida community.

One of the most unique venues in South Florida, the Miami House Museum is home to one of the only remaining American nickelodeons. The collection has grown to include more than 30 classic, often one-of-a-kind automobiles, neon signs, airplanes, a gas station, and a new 86-rank Wurlitzer theatre organ, as well as other American memorabilia from the turn of the century. The centerpiece of the museum is a fully operating carousel.

Eighteen-year-old Austin Gaines is a freshman at Tulane University (who will transfer to the University of Miami in the fall), and while he is certainly learning a lot, he could also teach his classmates some lessons about life.

Just five years ago, Gaines’ mother, Joan, was diagnosed with breast cancer at the time Gaines was celebrating his Bar Mitzvah. Instead of spending the monetary gifts he received that day, the then 13-year-old took the money and established a fund for cancer research instead. But Gaines didn’t stop there. A big basketball fan, he thought of a way to boost his research fund with a charity event. So at age 14 he convinced Glen Rice, then of the Miami Heat, to help with a celebrity basketball game that successfully raised $10,000.

Then last April, as a senior at Gulliver Preparatory Academy, Gaines organized his third NBA fundraiser with help from the Miami Heat and the University of Miami men’s basketball program. Over the years, Heat players Rice, Dan Marjorie, Ed Pinckney, and Tim Hardaway have participated in the fundraisers.

Gaines’ philanthropic efforts over the years finally paid off last summer. Last August, Gaines proudly delivered a check in the amount of $21,700 to UM/Sylvester Director W. Jarrard Goodwin, M.D., F.A.C.S., and Joyce Slingerland, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Braman Family Breast Cancer Institute at UM/Sylvester to help support Slingerland’s work at the institute. As a result, today, he is considered one of the newest and youngest members of the Founders’ Society.

Gaines is now back at school in Louisiana, and although he is busy studying and attending classes, he promises the fundraising events will go on—but this time with help from his younger brother. The next event, Help “Beach” Breast Cancer at Nikki Beach, is scheduled for June 5 in Miami. For more information, call 305-323-8407.

As for Austin’s mom, Joan, she just had a celebration of her own. She has been disease free now for five years.

This is the first of three young donors to be featured in Quest. More to come in future issues.