

cancer research,” says Denny. “Research is the only thing that will cure cancer. By getting involved, we’re protecting our future—our families, our colleagues, our friends, and our community.”



Denny and Paul Feinsilver

Her husband, Paul, is behind her every step of the way. In just four years, the Feinsilvers have rooted themselves in the cancer center, becoming founding members of Friends for Sylvester. Together, they sit on the

boards of Friends for Sylvester and the Founders’ Society, which Denny now co-chairs.

Ironically, on the day they were named to the Founders’ Society, cancer touched their lives in a personal way. The experience solidified their belief that UM/Sylvester is one of the top cancer centers in the world, and today, the Feinsilvers are Grand Founders.

When it came time to celebrate the successful outcome of their personal experience with cancer, Denny launched Coupons for a Cure. The successful fundraising program she developed turns the thoughtful deed of gift giving into a meaningful opportunity to support cancer research. In its first full year, the program generated 132 coupons (or donations to the cancer center). Just two years later, the number rose to 1,300, a figure Denny predicts will exceed 2,000 this year.

“It’s a simple, user-friendly program,” she says, “that is not only self-perpetuating in its growth, but also is enhanced by additional programs dur-

ing the holidays as well as displays at local businesses.”

In 2001, Denny chaired the inaugural *Live on Lincoln*, a major biennial Friends event that raises funds for cancer research through a celebrity performance, an exclusive pre-theater dinner, and a spectacular live auction. This year’s event (November 13), which Denny will chair again, features renowned actor Tony Danza, and is expected to raise more than \$250,000 for cancer research.

“This is an institution we believe in,” says Denny. “We’re committed to more than just financial support. We’re committed to getting the word out and marketing the cause. We want to let people know how very fortunate they are to have UM/Sylvester in their own backyard.”

THE BERNICE KRASLOW OVARIAN CANCER RESEARCH FUND

When UM/Sylvester physicians diagnosed Bernice Kraslow with third-stage ovarian cancer in 1990, both she and her husband, University of Miami Life Trustee and Public Health Trust Board Member David Kraslow, were shocked.

“They call this the silent disease of women because it usually produces few symptoms,” says Hervy E. Averette, M.D., American Cancer Society professor of oncology, Division of Gynecologic Oncology at UM/Sylvester.

Then, of course, came the questions. What were her treatment options? What were her chances for recovery? What next?

“The initial diagnosis was that she would live another two to three years. She might live longer or less. There was

no guarantee,” recalls David Kraslow. “Fortunately, she was a fighter. She received superb care at UM/Sylvester, and she lived another 12 years.”

Standard therapy for advanced ovarian cancer involves surgery, followed by chemotherapy. According to Averette, Bernice’s doctor, extensive surgery was performed to remove the bulk of the tumor. In addition to follow-up surgeries, she was placed on a dozen different types of regimens of chemotherapy and drugs over the next 12 years. Bernice responded well to the treatment most of the time.

“The uniqueness of this case was that Bernice Kraslow was tough; she was a fighter and as feisty as anyone I have ever seen,” recalls Averette. “Bernice hung in there—I don’t think that I ever made a suggestion that she didn’t follow.”

During her 12-year bout with the disease, Bernice didn’t sit idly by. Determined to help other women in the same situation, she created a forum at

UM/Sylvester to allow cancer patients to support each other through knowledge and hope. She also fielded calls from women from around the country who called her to share their experiences, often finding inspiration in Bernice’s remarkable story of survival. Her efforts even caught the eye of cancer center staff, who presented Bernice with a business card that read: Bernice Kraslow, Cancer Educational Consultant.

“Bernice asked a lot of questions after the first surgery and started researching the disease and talking to people,” recalls Kraslow. “That’s when



David Kraslow

she decided that she would be a source of knowledge for other women with ovarian cancer.”

Bernice had a severe setback in July 2001, and she agreed the time probably had come to engage hospice. But she rallied remarkably, tore up the hospice papers, and survived another year with a reasonably good quality of life. She died in July 2002.

“She was a survivor,” says Averette. “She had the perfect positive attitude to do what she had to do to be with her family until the very end.”

In memory of Bernice and her tireless efforts to help others, the family created a fund in her name for contributions to cancer research—the Bernice Kraslow Ovarian Cancer Research Fund.

“Both Bernice and I were determined to create a program to support research at UM/Sylvester,” says Kraslow, “and at the time of her death, I was convinced that this was the thing to do. This fund is in concert with everything that she had done during the course of her illness.”

Kraslow, in fact, believes wholeheartedly that more individuals should support cancer research. This notion has even trickled down to other members of his family. For his Bar Mitzvah project, grandson Ryan Dandes solicited collectibles from the Hurricanes and other sports teams, which he raffled off to raise money for his grandmother’s fund. The effort raised more than \$600.

“Not only did we create the fund as a way to memorialize Bernice, it was a way of creating a vehicle to support

research dedicated only to ovarian cancer,” says Kraslow. “It’s not a closed fund by any means; we welcome any penny that comes in.”

R. KIRK LANDON

R Kirk Landon truly believes in cancer research and feels strongly that South Florida deserves a world-class cancer research center. So strongly, in fact, that he’s put the financial support of his family’s foundation behind the facility he says is among the best in the Southeastern United States.

Landon understands that research is what ultimately will find a cure for cancer. And, he knows that financial support is key to advancing that research. Thus, when charged with the responsibility of administering the Kirk A. and Dorothy P. Landon Foundation, Landon approached UM/Sylvester about establishing a prize program for cancer research. The foundation was established by a bequest from his stepmother who willed that her estate be committed to medical research, especially cancer research.

That meeting, and several that followed, became the foundation for the Landon-AACR Prizes for Cancer Research, two of the world’s most lucrative prizes for cancer research. Early next year, UM/Sylvester, along with the Landon Foundation, will host the second annual ceremony awarding two, \$200,000 prizes for cancer research. The first will be given to Charles J. Sherr, M.D., Ph.D., from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, who will

receive recognition for basic cancer research in the area of tumor cell biology. The second, for his work in translational cancer research, will be given to Dennis J. Slamon, M.D., Ph.D., from the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center at UCLA. The 2004 event will take place January 16.

As part of the program, and because of Landon’s deep regard for the important work under way at UM/Sylvester, the award recipients spend time in Miami exchanging ideas with UM/Sylvester faculty. Landon realizes it is UM/Sylvester that is truly advancing cancer research in the region, something he believes is absolutely vital to the well being of the community, which he adores.

“UM/Sylvester has recruited some of the country’s most outstanding cancer researchers,” he says. “As they continue to add to that program, they will continue to do more and more in the fight against cancer.”

Landon says giving “constantly and continually” to cancer and cancer research is essential. “The more we can do, the better we can be,” he says. “When it comes to cancer, it’s not a question of if, it’s a question of when. The numbers are staggering; everyone has had some kind of cancer experience, somewhere in their family.”

Landon praises the recent strides made at UM/Sylvester to advance basic and translational research.

JOHN AND JUDY SCHULTE

It takes a few tries to get John Schulte to agree to talk about the contributions that he and his wife, Judy, have made to the University of Miami Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center. He shies away from the spotlight,



R. Kirk Landon