The Sylvester Family: Changing the Face of Cancer Care

When Harcourt Sylvester, Jr., first pledged $27.5 million to the University of Miami in 1986, in honor of his parents, he probably never imagined the way his family’s gift would change the face of cancer care in South Florida.

“I think he dreamed the cancer center would be wonderful, but I don’t think any of us could have imagined what it would become.”

Jayne Malfitano
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support of the Sylvester family,
our cancer center is an uplifting
and special place.”

W. Jarrard Goodwin, M.D., F.A.C.S.

The initial multimillion dollar
donation made through the Harcourt
and Virginia Sylvester Foundation of
Palm Beach was like none other in the
University of Miami’s history. But the
family’s commitment to cancer care
didn’t end there. In 1988, the family
added another $5 million to their
original pledge to help fund the con-
struction and maintenance of what
would become the University of
Miami Sylvester Comprehensive Can-
cer Center.

Having seen his grandchild sur-
vive cancer, Sylvester was later moved
to do something more. He pledged an
additional $5 million to create a can-
cer research floor in the Batchelor In-
stitute for Children’s Research at the
University of Miami School of Medicine.

Recently, the Sylvester family con-
tributed an additional $11.5 million
to UM/Sylvester’s capital campaign,
which means that the Sylvester Foun-
dation has contributed or pledged
more than $50 million to fund pro-
grams in the University of Miami
School of Medicine. The Sylvester
Foundation was recently inducted
into the University’s new Millennium
Society.

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port of the Sylvester family, our
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place,” said UM/Sylvester director, W.
Jarrard Goodwin, M.D., F.A.C.S.

Along with the Sylvester family’s
generous financial support, their in-
put and guidance over the years have
been important factors in the contin-
gued growth and success of the cancer
center.

Today, Malfitano participates ac-
tively on the UM/Sylvester Board of
Governors and is a member of the
Marketing Committee of the Board.
Last March, Sylvester and his daugh-
ters were on stage for the ribbon cut-
ting ceremony to mark the opening
of UM/Sylvester at Deerfield Beach,
a 10,000-square-foot satellite facility
located on the corner of I-95 and S.W.
10th Street, on the county line. It was
an important day for the family, who
all live nearby in Palm Beach County.
Jayne and Laura are honored to have
the torch passed to them and to fur-
ther help the cancer center’s ability to
positively impact the South Florida
community, and indeed the entire
cancer initiative.

“My father feels a great connec-
tion with all the people he comes
in contact with at UM/Sylvester, and
that inspires him to do more,” says
Malfitano.

“He has always been so understated;
he just wants to make a difference.”