The University of South Alabama Mitchell Cancer Institute this spring hosted a Continuing Medical Education event, Oncology Outlook 2010, at the Grand Hotel Marriott Resort, Golf Club & Spa. Drawing over 105 physicians and allied health professionals from South Alabama, the Florida Panhandle, the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and beyond, Oncology Outlook 2010 was a huge success.

The MCI is committed to bringing together regional physicians to share knowledge, network with peers, and advance cancer treatment, and this event helped fulfill this mission. Dr. Ron Russell, chief of Radiation Oncology at the MCI, and Dr. Anthony Martino, associate member physician at the MCI and associate professor of neurosurgery at USA, served as co-directors.

As program co-directors, Drs. Martino and Russell brought together a cadre of excellent speakers from the private practice community, the MCI and the USA College of Medicine, including Dr. Edward Flotte, Drs. Larkin Daniels, Paul Rider, Paul Scott, Lynn Dyess, Gerhard Boehm, Rodney Rocconi, and Eddie Reed. In addition, Dr. Alan Katz, a nationally renowned expert in stereotactic radiosurgery, Dr. Itzhak Avital, a surgical oncologist with the National Cancer Institute, Dr. Todd Blodgett, a PET/CT imaging pioneer, and Dr. Rock Mackie, co-founder of TomoTherapy, Inc., spoke at the event and shared their expertise with the audience.

Events included a networking reception and Continuing Medical Education conference. The conference success could not have been realized without the support of generous sponsors. Planning has already begun for next year’s event.

HIGHLIGHTS

Celebrate Hope ..........2-3
Swift Biotechnology ....... 4
Upcoming Events .......... 8

Follow us on Facebook: USA Mitchell Cancer Institute

Lee Thompson, Paul Rider, Paul Scott, Lynn Dyess, Gerhard Boehm, Rodney Rocconi, and Eddie Reed.

Dr. Anthony Martino

Dr. John Russell

Dr. Gerhard Boehm

Margaret Sullivan, USA President Gordon Moulton, Geri Moulton

Dr. Eddie Reed

Dr. Eddie Reed has assumed major leadership roles in the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) the world’s largest cancer-research professional organization, comprised of more than 30,000 individuals worldwide.

Three years ago, Dr. Reed was elected to the AACR board of directors. In March the AACR sponsored an international meeting on Translational Cancer Medicine in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Dr. Reed served on the program committee for the Amsterdam meeting, chaired a scientific session on pharmacogenomics, and spoke on his work conducted at the MCI.

Dr. Reed’s talk focused on the genetic control of DNA repair, as it applies to certain types of chemotherapy. His lab has discovered a new link between the Hedgehog pathway, and the repair of chemotherapy-induced DNA damage.

Dr. Reed will serve as a co-chair of the Scientific Program Committee for the 102nd Annual Meeting of the AACR.
One cool, crisp day in November, patients of the Mitchell Cancer Institute were greeted by an unusual sight as they were shuttled from their cars to the front entrance of the facility in golf carts. A long row of tents, at the far end a large bandstand, and dozens of volunteers were busy scurrying around to prepare for the inaugural Celebrate Hope gala. Patients didn’t seem to mind the minor inconveniences that come along with setting up for such an event, particularly when they learned that the money raised would directly benefit them. By late afternoon, the front of the Mitchell Cancer Institute was transformed into a magical and elegant setting with gorgeous flowers, an entrance with huge and beautifully lit butterflies, and food stations of artistic design. The inaugural Celebrate Hope gala proved to be one of the most spectacular events in Mobile and the largest fundraising event in the history of the Mitchell Cancer Institute.

The visionaries behind Celebrate Hope were Cynthia Zipperly and Jerry and Tonia Silverstein. Under their extraordinary leadership, a committee comprised of local volunteers and philanthropists worked for nearly a year to make sure every possible detail of the event was covered. More than $200,000 was generated in net contributions thanks to the overwhelming support of the community, with 100 percent of the proceeds designated to support cancer research at the Mitchell Cancer Institute.

Amidst the moonlit setting, more than 500 guests dined on gourmet delicacies such as filet mignon, shrimp and grits, West Indies salad, grilled lamb chops, parmesan risotto, chicken and andouille cassoulet, and gorgeous desserts. Chefs included Pete Blohme, Panini Pete's Café and Bakeshoppe; Jeremy Enfinger, Ruth's Chris Steak House; Ryan Glass, Camellia Café; Vincent Henderson, Vincent Henderson Signature Events; Clifton Morrissette, Oysterella’s Seafood Restaurant; Marty Pollock, Battle House Renaissance Hotel; Martha Rutledge, Martha Rutledge Catering; and Wesley True, True Restaurant. Fine wines and specialty beers were paired with each dish to
enhance its culinary flavors. The grounds and lobby were transformed with breathtaking floral arrangements and oversized butterflies that carried out the event’s theme, making the evening magical and memorable. Following a brief presentation by USA President Gordon Moulton, guests danced the night away. Jimmy Hall of Wet Willie along with the Rock and Pop Masters, a group comprised of musicians of former top-40 hits, gave a stunning performance.

For those sponsoring the event, attending the Celebrate Hope gala was just one benefit of their generous donation. In addition, they were invited to the Premier Partner event held two nights later at the Beau Rivage Resort and Casino.

Transportation for sponsors and their guests was provided to and from Biloxi. Those choosing to stay overnight were given a discounted room rate. Once arriving at the resort, guests were treated to a gourmet food and wine-pairing dinner and live entertainment before heading to the theater for a performance by late-night talk show host Jay Leno.

Please take a moment to view pictures of Celebrate Hope and the Premier Partner events by logging on to www.usamci.com/celebratehope.

More importantly, make plans now to join us for Celebrate Hope 2010 scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 18.

You certainly will not want to miss this premier fundraiser event in Mobile, and your support of this gala will inspire hope in those suffering from cancer.
A lifesaving cancer screening technology under development by a firm closely aligned with the MCI, has won the company a statewide award for its business plan.

Swift Biotechnology’s screening tool for endometrial and ovarian cancers could save 22,000 lives and over $1 billion in health care costs annually by avoiding the expense of later stage radiation and chemotherapy, according to company leaders. Currently, there is no screening tool for these deadly gynecologic cancers, which typically aren’t detected until the later, more dangerous stages.

Swift Biotechnology was one of three winners at the annual Alabama Launchpad Business Plan Competition for its plan to develop screens for endometrial and ovarian cancer using biomarkers.

“One of the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute’s primary objectives is to conduct state-of-the-art research leading to medical breakthroughs, so we are highly gratified with the success of Swift Biotechnology in the Alabama Launchpad program, and we are further convinced that MCI research will contribute to the ultimate humanitarian goal of longer, healthier lives for all,” said USA President Gordon Moulton.

This technology was the brainchild of Drs. Michael Finan and Rod Rocconi, gynecologic oncologists, and Dr. Lewis Pannell, research scientist. Their collaboration at MCI combined the clinical skills and creativity of Drs. Rocconi and Finan with Dr. Pannell’s almost 20 years of prior work at the National Institutes of Health, much of it in the biomarker field.

Dr. Finan said, “This is an example of how clinicians working with research scientists can develop technology to revolutionize cancer screening in women.”

MCI Executive Director and Abraham Mitchell Chair Dr. Michael Boyd said, “This project exemplifies MCI’s mission and commitment to improving cancer diagnosis, treatment and prevention through translational, ‘bench-to-bedside’ research by focusing our research and technology development efforts on unmet needs.”

Endometrial cancer is the most common of all the gynecologic cancers, with over 40,000 cases diagnosed each year in the United States alone. Ovarian cancer is found in approximately 25,000 American women each year. However, almost 22,000 of those diagnosed die simply because they are identified too late to be saved. If diagnosed early, virtually every woman survives. If diagnosed in the later stages, 3 out of 4 women die.

Dr. Laurie Owen, Barbara Colle Chair and MCI associate director for basic and translational sciences, said, “The relationship between MCI and Swift aligns business and regulatory expertise with a deep knowledge of cancer biology and oncology that will accelerate commercialization and patient access to critically needed early detection methods for endometrial and ovarian cancer.”

Dr. Rocconi added, “The mission of USA and the Mitchell Cancer Institute is not only to invent the technology, but to seek out partners like Swift with experience in commercializing the technology to make sure that the patients realize the benefit of the science.”

Dr. Pannell said, “Swift, with offices at our facility, is an example of the type of collaboration encouraged here. Great things happen when medical, research and business expertise come together.”
I recently had the opportunity to work with a gentleman whose life was forever changed by the Mitchell Cancer Institute. His wife lost her battle against cancer after a long and courageous fight. During the course of her treatment, the couple not only found strength in their love for each other, but they also found an overwhelming amount of compassion and support from the nurses, doctors and staff of the Mitchell Cancer Institute.

“These people are my family,” he told me one day during a tour of the facility. As we walked the halls and those nurses, doctors and staff we came in contact with quickly rushed to give him a hug and once again offer condolences for his loss, I witnessed firsthand how true his statement was. This devoted husband wanted to show his gratitude to those who cared for his wife while simultaneously creating a lifelong legacy in her memory. He made a donation to the Mitchell Cancer Institute and, in return, his gift will be recognized in perpetuity with a bench plaque in memory of his wife.

People often approach me about wanting to make a donation to the Mitchell Cancer Institute but they aren’t in a position to make a major gift. For these individuals, memorial gifts or honorariums are a great way to make a difference.

Whether you would like to honor one of the employees for the care you or your family member received, or to make a memorial gift for someone who has recently passed away, gifts in any amount help support the operations of the Mitchell Cancer Institute and are the lifeblood of our continued growth and service expansions. In return for your heartfelt donation, the Mitchell Cancer Institute will notify the person you designate that a gift has been made in his or her honor or in memory of a loved one.

If you would like to learn more about giving opportunities at the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute, please contact me at (251) 460-7276 or via e-mail at kmccarron@usouthal.edu.

Kelly McCarron, Assistant Director of Medical Development

EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS IN RADIATION ONCOLOGY

The spring brought many exciting developments to the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute’s radiation oncology program. Dr. John R. Russell joined the MCI as Elsie Colle Chair of Radiation Oncology and chief of the radiation oncology department. Prior to joining the MCI, the 30-year radiation oncology veteran served as chief of radiation oncology services for the Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, and, most recently, for the Mobile Infirmary Medical Center. A graduate of St. Mary’s University in San Antonio, Texas, he received a master’s degree in medical physics from the University of Wisconsin, his medical degree from the University of Texas and completed his residency in radiation oncology at the University of Florida.

Russell is active in national clinical trial groups including RTOG, SWOG, GOG, ECOG, and NSABP and participates on national committees for ASTRO, ACCC, and RTOG.

This spring also marked the acquisition of all radiation oncology equipment and staff from the Mobile Infirmary Medical Center. Under Dr. Russell’s leadership, the Mitchell Cancer Institute now provides a complete and seamless continuum of radiation oncology service offerings and technologies.

Dr. Russell said, “This consolidation of radiation oncology services allows us to better serve cancer patients in our region in an integrated fashion and provide for the best care for all patients.”

This expansion added over 18 new employees, including radiation oncology technologists, nurses, and dosimetrists to the MCI, bringing the total employee count to over 260. The MCI radiation
Third Annual Shrimp for Life - NYC “Stars Fell on Alabama” was held this spring at Cedar Lake in New York City. Once again, this event proved to be one of the Mitchell Cancer Institute’s premier events, raising more than $35,000 for the Audrey Joyce Grodnick Breast Cancer Research Endowment. The Host Committee, comprised of Abby Grodnick, Meredith Wertheim, Meryl Grodnick, Julia Wertheim, Leah Grodnick and Eve Wertheim, organized a fabulous night, which included passed hors d’oeuvres, a silent auction and dancing. Also included were sales of the “Shrimp for Life” clothing line by G. Harvell Men’s Clothier of Mobile, with a percentage of the proceeds from sales going to the Institute.

The radiation oncology department also recruited two additional radiation oncologists, the husband/wife team of Drs. Suzanne Russo and Roger Ove, who will join the MCI in August. Drs. Russo and Ove have served as associate professors in the department of radiation oncology at the Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center at East Carolina University since 2007.

All of these advancements in radiation oncology are examples of the growing and expanding role of the MCI as an academic referral center for the region.

The American Cancer Society held its annual Chili Cook-off in Bienville Square. Mitchell Cancer Institute team members included Lewis Pannell, Ph.D.; Laura Gibson, clinical nurse; and Tracey Hammack, chief of nursing.

Exciting continued from page 5

The McGill-Toolen Boy’s and Girl’s Varsity Soccer teams hosted a soccer game against Faith Academy, to honor eight teachers from McGill-Toolen who are fighting cancer or are survivors, and to raise cancer awareness. In the opening ceremony, Mrs. Lucy Holmes-Dees, Mr. David Jernigan, Mrs. Sharon McDonald, Ms. Ginny Neese, Mrs. Amy Perry, Deacon Holcomb Pryor, Mrs. Carolyn Smith and Mrs. Clarita Stone were recognized for their courageous fight and dedication to teaching. The teachers’ combined service totals more than 150 years of love and dedication to McGill-Toolen. Over $2,250 in donations were collected from the event for the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute.

The Citizens for a Better Grand Bay held the 12th Annual Walking for the Memories. This one-mile walk is held in honor or memory of loved ones who have been touched by cancer. More than 100 devoted walkers turned out to show their support and help raise more than $6,200 to support the Mitchell Cancer Institute. The event also included an MCI information booth, bake sale, door prizes, and live auction. Over the past three years, the group has donated more than $26,000 to the MCI and named two patient exam rooms have been named in the facility.

The McGill-Toolen Boy’s and Girl’s Varsity Soccer teams hosted a soccer game against Faith Academy, to honor eight teachers from McGill-Toolen who are fighting cancer or are survivors, and to raise cancer awareness. In the opening ceremony, Mrs. Lucy Holmes-Dees, Mr. David Jernigan, Mrs. Sharon McDonald, Ms. Ginny Neese, Mrs. Amy Perry, Deacon Holcomb Pryor, Mrs. Carolyn Smith and Mrs. Clarita Stone were recognized for their courageous fight and dedication to teaching. The teachers’ combined service totals more than 150 years of love and dedication to McGill-Toolen. Over $2,250 in donations were collected from the event for the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute.

The McGill-Toolen Boy’s and Girl’s Varsity Soccer teams hosted a soccer game against Faith Academy, to honor eight teachers from McGill-Toolen who are fighting cancer or are survivors, and to raise cancer awareness. In the opening ceremony, Mrs. Lucy Holmes-Dees, Mr. David Jernigan, Mrs. Sharon McDonald, Ms. Ginny Neese, Mrs. Amy Perry, Deacon Holcomb Pryor, Mrs. Carolyn Smith and Mrs. Clarita Stone were recognized for their courageous fight and dedication to teaching. The teachers’ combined service totals more than 150 years of love and dedication to McGill-Toolen. Over $2,250 in donations were collected from the event for the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute.
MCI Researcher Awarded $1.4 Million National Cancer Institute Grant to Study Breast Cancer.

Based on the long-running popular 1930's radio show, which later blossomed into the 1950's Western television series, “The Lone Ranger” became the running theme that inspired the creative mind of local artist, Gallery 54 owner, and MCI patient Leila Hollowell, when she initiated a volunteer program at the Mitchell Cancer Institute.

Hollowell shared her feelings about her experience undergoing treatment: “I was fortunate to have such tremendous support, both emotionally and physically. To go through cancer therapy creates a lot of fear and anxiety, and to have family or supportive friends be there throughout treatment makes such a difference in your outlook. I believed that other friends and acquaintances would jump at the opportunity to give a few hours a month to help be that consistent, reassuring presence for those in need.”

The volunteer groups’ name, Chemo Sabe, is a play on the affectionate term used by Tonto, the Lone Ranger’s constant companion. Never known by his name, the masked Texas Ranger was simply referred to as “Kemo Sabe,” which means “faithful friend.”

“Our mission is to be there for these patients and also to be there for the nurses who work so hard to provide quality care to so many… to be a faithful friend,” Hollowell said.

Whether just providing a blanket needed for warmth, teaching someone to navigate the computer, or empathizing with the physical and mental strain of managing a chronic illness, Leila and her team of volunteers have greatly enhanced compassionate care provided at the MCI. The Chemo Sabe’s provide morning and afternoon supportive volunteer services in the infusion suite.

Throughout the West, the Lone Ranger was known for his high ideals, ethical ways, and shooting only silver bullets. The valuable, precious metal found in the bullet reminded him of the value and preciousness of each human life and his responsibility in respecting that life.

Hollowell added, “I hope that every person who undergoes treatment at the MCI becomes a survivor and that the treatment here proves to be the silver bullet needed to eradicate cancer. It is our goal that a patient never feels like a lone ranger while here.”

To learn more about Volunteer Services at the Mitchell Cancer Institute, please contact Susan Crutchfield at (251) 665-8000 or scrutchfield@usouthal.edu.

Led by Dr. Rajeev Samant, an MCI research team aims to unravel the role of a novel gene, NMI, in reducing breast tumor growth.

“With the Human Genome Project, we know the DNA sequence for all the human genes, but we do not know the properties of the proteins they code,” said Dr. Samant.

Earlier last year, Dr. Samant’s laboratory reported landmark research on a protein NMI, N-Myc Interactor. “We found that in cancer cells this protein was absent, as if someone turned the switch off…” said Dr. Samant. “However there are no mutations detected in this gene in patients. When we engineered the cancer cells to get the protein back in, the cells lost most of their ability to grow tumors or metastasize.”

Metastasis, the spread of cancer, is a major problem in cancer treatment, causing most of the complications and mortalities in malignancies such as breast cancer and melanoma.

During development, the cells of an embryo keep moving and rearranging to eventually give rise to the body structures. Similarly, cancer cells learn to go back in time and are able to move around like those cells. A major breakthrough in Dr. Samant’s laboratory showed that NMI stops cancer cells’ ability to go back in time by stopping defective cellular signaling. Further, Dr. Samant’s team showed that the gene, NMI, works in reducing melanoma and breast cancer growth. This study was published last August in the highly reputed International Journal of Cancer.

“To reap the benefits of our findings, we need to unravel precise molecular events. We need to define which switch turns NMI off, and understand how NMI stops the capacity of the cancer cells to go back in time. This information is key to future treatments,” said Dr. Samant. In March, MCI received a five-year $1.4 million grant from the National Cancer Institute to support these efforts.

This award was granted to the research team led by Dr. Rajeev Samant. Drs. Allan Tucker, chair of the department of pathology; Lalita Samant, assistant professor, department of oncologic sciences, MCI; and Madhuri Mulekar, department of mathematics and statistics are part of the collaborative team.
**UPCOMING MCI EVENTS**

**September 9, 2010**  
**Charity Denim**  
Charity Denim will hold a charity sale on Sept. 9 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at The Terrace located at the University of South Alabama Student Center. Proceeds will benefit the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute. Charity Denim, a discount designer jean company, is offering more than 600 pairs of designer jeans with sizes ranging from 00 to 10/12. Items are priced 40 to 60 percent off retail.

---

**September 18, 2010**  
**Third Annual GO RUN**  
The Third Annual “GO” for Gynecologic Oncology 5K Run and Fun Run to benefit gynecologic cancer research at the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute will be held on Sept. 18, at 8 a.m. starting at the Mitchell Center Lawn on USA’s campus. The run is produced by the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute and Little Red Hen Productions. This year promises, once again, to be one of the largest and best races in Mobile.

---

**October 7, 2010**  
**Think Pink Breast Cancer Awareness Tea**  
The USA Mitchell Cancer Institute and Infirmary Health System will co-sponsor a Tea on Thursday, Oct. 7, at 4 p.m. at the MCI. Breast Cancer survivors will share their journeys.

---

**October 12, 2010**  
**Fourth Annual Eastern Shore Toyota/Hyundai of Daphne Golf Tournament**  
The Fourth Annual Eastern Shore Toyota/Hyundai of Daphne Golf Tournament to benefit breast cancer research at the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 12 at 1 p.m. at TimberCreek Golf Club in Daphne. Registration and lunch will begin at 11 a.m. Prizes include two hole-in-one new car giveaways. Award prizes will be given for the top three teams, longest drive and closest to the pin. The cost is $125, which includes cart and green fees, driving range balls, lunch and dinner. Registration deadline is Oct. 8.

---

**November 18, 2010**  
**Second Annual Celebrate Hope Gala**  
The Second Annual Celebrate Hope Gala will be held on Thursday, Nov. 18 at 6 p.m. at the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute. The event will feature local chefs serving a delicious sampling of one of their signature dishes accompanied by fine wines and specialty beers selected specifically for each dish. Additionally, there will be live entertainment. All sponsors will be invited to the Premier Partner event at the Beau Rivage Resort and Casino. Proceeds benefit cancer research at the MCI. Limited number of tickets available. For complete details of the inaugural Celebrate Hope gala, turn to pages 2 - 3.