

KECK/USC DEAN'S REPORT

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\$39 million in gifts March through May



Dr. David B. Agus

The Keck School of Medicine of USC reports six philanthropic gifts totaling \$39 million over a three-month period, March to May 2009.

"We are always grateful for the support of our donors who believe in the important work under way at the Keck School of Medicine, but we are especially appreciative of those whose gifts will ensure that we continue advancing our mission, particularly in high-priority research areas, during these challenging economic times," said Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito.

THE SIX \$1 MILLION-PLUS GIFTS INCLUDE:

▶ \$24 million from a private family foundation for research

- ▶ \$2.2 million for breast cancer research from the Stand Up 2 Cancer project
- ▶ \$5 million from an anonymous individual for research
- ▶ a bequest of \$1.8 million for cancer research
- ▶ and \$1 million from Eugene Hoffman and Valerie Foster Hoffman to support breast cancer research at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.

The sixth gift is a recently announced \$5 million donation from the Ellison Medical Foundation to support cancer research under the direction of David B. Agus, M.D., an oncologist and cancer researcher who joined the Keck School faculty on April 1 as a professor of medicine.

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Urology chair receives stylish LA welcome

Pioneering urologist and surgeon Inderbir S. "Indy" Gill, M.D., was welcomed to Los Angeles and the University of Southern California Trojan Family at a Beverly Hills reception hosted by actress Shirley MacLaine and Keck School of Medicine of USC Dean Carmen A. Puliafito on Saturday, May 30.

More than 300 guests, including USC friends, donors and referring physicians, attended the cocktail gala at the Montage Hotel, including MacLaine's brother, actor Warren Beatty and his wife, actress Annette Bening, and USC Executive Vice President and Provost C.L. Max Nikias.

Gill is chairman of the Catherine and Joseph Aresty Department of Urology and is the founding executive director of the USC Institute of Urology. Recruited from the Cleveland Clinic, where the urology program is ranked #2 in the country by *U.S. News and World Report*, Gill has pioneered minimally invasive surgeries for cancers of the kidney, prostate and bladder.

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At the May 30 reception for Department of Urology chairman Inderbir S. Gill are, from left, Dean Carmen A. Puliafito, Gill, and actors Shirley MacLaine, Annette Bening and Warren Beatty. Photo by Steve Cohn

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Renowned breast cancer expert coming to USC

A national figure in breast cancer research is headed to the Keck School of Medicine of USC to serve as co-leader of the Women's Cancer Program at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.



Dr. Debasish Tripathy

Debasish (Debu) Tripathy, M.D., has been appointed professor of medicine by Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito, effective Aug. 1, 2009. Tripathy will hold the Art and Priscilla Ulene Chair in Women's Cancer, and will be head of the Section of Women's Cancers, Division of Oncology, in the Department of Medicine. He will join Michael Press, M.D., professor of pathology, who has been associated with the Women's Cancer Program for the last 16 years.

"Dr. Tripathy is a national authority in breast cancer," said Puliafito. "We are delighted that he is coming to USC as we strengthen our clinical research activities and our patient-focused programs."

"I believe that USC is responding to a new mission that is an expansion of patient care, a bigger commitment to research, and a dedication to having the two work side by side," said Tripathy. "I believe that clinical care, clinical research and laboratory research all go hand in hand."

A nationally recognized figure in clinical research, Tripathy focuses his interest on breast cancer therapy. For the past 20 years, he has studied growth factor receptors, important targets in breast and other cancers. Tripathy was part of the original team that brought the now commonly used drug Herceptin into clinical care. Currently, his focus is on expanding what is known about growth factor receptors and developing newer treatments for patients who are resistant to the existing therapeutic options.

In addition to his expertise in clinical research, Tripathy is profoundly involved in patient care and survivorship issues. He is particularly interested in the patient perspective of the cancer experience and dissemination of informational tools. Tripathy is co-author of the book, *Breast Cancer: Beyond Convention*, featur-

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Tripathy comes to USC from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, where he served as professor of internal medicine, director of the Komen/UT Southwestern Breast Cancer Research Program and holder of the Annette Simmons Distinguished Chair in Breast Cancer Research. He was also president and chief executive officer of Physicians' Education Resource in Dallas, a continuing medical education and publishing company specializing in oncology and hematology.

As the incoming co-leader of the Women's Cancer Program, Tripathy has identified several goals, including developing a nationally recognized women's cancer service; increasing the number of treatment and clinical trial options for patients; developing a clinical trials and research program that matches the needs of patients and interfaces with the areas of scientific excellence at USC; setting up community outreach programs and forums; and establishing a national and international leadership position in medical peer oncology education.

ing advice from other prominent physicians, such as Drs. Susan Love and Dean Ornish. He also serves as editor-in-chief of *CURE* magazine, which is the most widely circulated cancer-specific magazine for patients.

For his exceptional work, Tripathy has received numerous prestigious awards, including the Heroes Award, presented by the Breast Cancer Fund for excellence in clinical care. He also received the Award in Medicine Research from the Greater Dallas Asian American Chamber of Commerce for his outstanding research accomplishments in breast cancer.

"I am excited to come to USC because historically this place has a wonderful track record of excellence in the basic sciences, and the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center is one of the original cancer centers from 1973," said Tripathy. "All of those things together, along with the University's new commitment to patient care and clinical research, told me that this is the right place and the right time."

USC Norris “dream team” receives \$2.2 million for cancer research



Dr. Peter Jones

The USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center is home to one of five prestigious “Dream Teams” across the country to receive funding from Stand Up 2 Cancer, an initiative dedicated to funding cutting-edge research designed to bring new cancer treatment to patients in an accelerated time frame.

Peter Jones, Ph.D., director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, is co-leader of the Norris “Dream Team” announced May 27. Jones and team leader Stephen Baylin, M.D., deputy director of the Sidney Kimmel

Comprehensive Cancer Center, Johns Hopkins University, have been awarded one of five three-year grants worth a total of \$73.6 million.

“We believe this collaborative process will help us develop more targeted therapies, and that it will result in a substantial benefit to patients,” said Jones, director of the Urological Research Laboratories and distinguished professor of biochemistry and molecular biology and urology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

The Jones and Baylin Dream Team project is titled “Bringing Epigenetic Therapy to the Forefront of Cancer Management” and will focus on epigenetic therapy, a highly promising area of cancer research. The total grant award for the project is \$9 million, with \$2.2 million coming to USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.

The team will hone in on the process called DNA demethylation, which effectively “silences” cancer genes. This will be followed by a clinical trial to see how well new drug therapy works to thwart the epigenetic changes that cause cancer.

“We are interested in the way that genes become switched on and off, and how this leads to cancer,” said Jones. “We can use drugs to switch the genes back on again. But we need to understand what went wrong first before we can fix it.”

Jones recently received the 2009 Prize for Basic Cancer Research from the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) and the Kirk A. and Dorothy P. Landon Foundation.

“We are enormously proud of Dr. Jones and his most recent achievements – the Landon Award and the Stand Up 2 Cancer ‘Dream Team’ designation are representative of the high esteem in which he is held. His USC Norris and Keck School colleagues congratulate him,” said Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito.

Urology chair receives stylish LA welcome

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Gill is the first in the world to perform single-port “belly button” laparoscopic kidney donation surgery in a virtually scar-free manner. He also is the world leader in performing minimally invasive, kidney-sparing surgery for kidney cancer.

MacLaine, in her introduction of Gill, noted that Beatty found him when looking for a surgeon to help a friend. MacLaine said she spoke to Gill at length and was impressed with what she heard from him.

“We discussed the role of surgery, urology and the broader scope of what the medical profession means,” she said. “I found him to be conversant and an extremely intelligent man.”

MacLaine, who joked that she may have known Gill “for about one million years,” expressed her hope that her friendship with Gill would last for many years to come.

“I think minds are like parachutes — they function more fully when they’re open,” she said. “Welcome, Indy, my friend with a parachute mind.”

Puliafito noted Gill’s “leadership in the field of robotic and laparoscopic surgery for urologic cancers” and his international reputation. “He is truly a beacon surgeon — 70 percent of his patients come from around the world and across the United States.”

Gill elicited murmurs of amazement during his discussion of innovations his team is working on, including organ building and regeneration, image-guided surgery, automated robotic surgery and development of personalized medicine.

He also outlined his strategic vision for the USC Institute of Urology, including the goal of seeing the program ranked among the top five urologic programs in the country in the next five years, and the importance of philanthropy in achieving that goal.

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With this support, Agus will serve as principal investigator for the Molecular Technologies in Cancer project. The initiative will focus on molecularly targeted therapy, which holds promise as a new paradigm for cancer treatment.

The Ellison Medical Foundation is a nonprofit founded by entrepreneur Lawrence J. Ellison, CEO of the Oracle Corp. The foundation is dedicated to supporting new, creative research that might not be funded by traditional sources.

“It is my pleasure to work with Dr. Agus and his research associates in developing new technologies to help patients with

Agus’ research in proteomic technology seeks to integrate clinical trials, pre-clinical studies and molecularly targeted therapy — which focuses on molecular and cellular changes that are specific to cancer — to predict which patients will likely respond to a specific anti-cancer therapy. He leads a team of researchers at the USC Center for Applied Molecular Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine.

Agus also directs the new USC Westside Prostate Cancer Center, a multidisciplinary center in Beverly Hills that is geared toward care for patients with prostate cancer.

Prior to joining the Keck School, Agus served as the director of the

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cancer,” Ellison said. “I believe his unique approach to medical oncology will help better control many of the diseases impacting mankind today.”

Spielberg Family Center for Applied Proteomics and research director of the Louis Warschaw Prostate Cancer Center at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. He and his research team have concentrated on factors influencing the development and progression of cancer.

In the laboratory, Agus conducts research focused on understanding the biology of cancer and the development of new drugs and treatments for cancer. He also uses new technologies in the field of proteomics and nanotechnology that reveal valuable information regarding “on” and “off” switches of the cancer and ultimately a more complete understanding of the various factors that influence cancer development, progression and response to treatment.

Agus has published numerous articles and received several awards in the fields of cancer research and drug development. He graduated cum laude with honors in molecular biology from Princeton University and received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. He completed his medical internship and residency training at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

\$1 Million-Plus Gifts March–May 2009

DONOR	PURPOSE	AMOUNT
Private Family Foundation	Research	\$24,000,000
Stand Up To Cancer	Breast Cancer	\$2,200,000
Ellison Foundation	Research	\$5,000,000
Anonymous Individual	Research	\$5,000,000
Bequest	Cancer Research	\$1,800,000
Eugene Hoffman and Valerie Foster Hoffman	Cancer Research	\$1,000,000
	TOTAL	\$39,000,000

Baxter Foundation celebrates 50 years of giving

The Donald E. and Delia B. Baxter Foundation celebrated its 50th anniversary at an April 27 reception held in the Harlyne J. Norris Cancer Research Tower's Aresty Conference Center Atrium. The foundation, which was established by Delia Baxter to honor her husband Donald, made its first grant of \$6,000 in 1959 to USC.

In recognition of the extraordinary contributions of the foundation to the faculty and students of the Keck School of Medicine, Dean Carmen A. Puliafito and M. Elizabeth Fini, Ph.D., vice dean for research, unveiled the new name of the lower ground floor of the Harlyne J. Norris Cancer Research Tower—the Donald E. and Delia B. Baxter Foundation Floor.

In a letter to the foundation's trustees, USC President Steven B. Sample expressed his profound gratitude for the foundation's generosity and commitment. "With gifts in excess of \$10 million, your family has demonstrated its unwavering confidence in the school, its faculty and students," he stated. "Your family has had and will continue to have an extraordinary effect on the Keck School, medical education, research and human health around the globe." Puliafito presented the letter to the trustees, along with a letter from California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Through the Baxter Junior Faculty Fellowship Program and the Baxter Medical Student Summer Research Fellowship Program, the foundation has provided 25 faculty members and more than 600 medical students with resources to pursue cutting edge research.

Jonah Chan, Ph.D., assistant professor of biochemistry and molecular biology and a 2007 Baxter Fellow, spoke to the trustees and guests about the common goals of the foundation and the



At the unveiling ceremony and reception with Dean Puliafito (center left) on April 27 at the Harlyne J. Norris Cancer Research Tower are Donald E. and Delia B. Baxter Foundation Trustees (from left) Richard Haake, Donald Haake, Jane Haake-Russell, Martha Haake and Jim Russell.

Keck School's faculty and students. "We are all here today because we all share in the same vision—to make a difference and really contribute something special to humanity by minimizing human suffering," said Chan. "All of us gathered here are striving to do this, and it is only through your generosity, contributions and commitment to scientific research that we can make substantial progress."

Foundation trustee Donald Haake offered his thanks to the university administration, faculty and students. "The truth is we are very honored and feel fortunate to be able to support each and every one of you and the research that you do," he said. "The things you do make the world a better place."

The Donald E. and Delia B. Baxter Foundation supports educational and scientific institutions for research and development of medicine, instruments and fluids for alleviating pain and protecting and prolonging human life.

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He entertained the group with a story of inviting Warren Beatty to watch a surgical procedure. Beatty smiled and shook his head as Gill recalled Beatty, in a sterile environment, reaching out to rescue an item of surgical equipment that appeared to be falling.

"USC is really breathtaking in scope," Gill said in closing. "The entrepreneurship and leadership are energizing. We will put together a world-class team."

The USC Institute of Urology includes 20 full-time faculty and more than 30 post-graduate residents and fellows dedicated to excellence in patient care and research. The institute comprises eight specialty centers including: the Center for Comprehensive Urologic Oncology, Center for Pediatric Urology, Center for Kidney Transplantation, Advanced Robotics and Image-Guided Surgery Center, and Center for Female Urology, among others.

Dean's Photo Gallery

① May 23—Dean Puliafito and his wife, Dr. Janet Pine, stand on the field at Dodger Stadium just before Puliafito threw a ceremonial first pitch. Puliafito represented the Keck School of Medicine and USC University Hospital — the official hospital of the Los Angeles Dodgers. Photo by Juan Ocampo



② May 17—Tessa Stecker displays her newly-minted Keck School of Medicine diploma at the 2009 Keck School commencement, hosted by Dean Puliafito at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles. Photo by Brook Photo



③ May 8—Dean Puliafito presented medallions to members of the Class of 1959, including Wayne Fung (right) at the 50 Year Fellows Luncheon. The luncheon at Town and Gown honored those who graduated from the Keck School 50 or more years ago. Photo by Brian Morri



④ April 29—Dean Puliafito is joined by Sharon Hayes, a macular degeneration patient cared for by Puliafito, for an educational program titled "Spotlight on Macular Degeneration." Led by a panel of Keck School of Medicine experts, the program was part of a day-long meeting of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine's Independent Citizens Oversight Committee. Photo by Veronica Jauriqui



⑤ May 10—Dean Puliafito appears on the cover of Ocular Surgery News next to an optical coherence tomography imaging device, a technology he co-invented.



⑥ April 15—Dean Puliafito (second from right) celebrates USC's acquisition of USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital with (pictured from left): Ed Roski, chairman of the USC Board of Trustees; Mitch Creem, CEO of the hospitals; Dean Puliafito; and C. L. Max Nikias, USC executive vice president and provost. Photo by Steve Cohn

