

# The Journey to HOPE



In 2019, David White received shocking news. He had known something was wrong. As a cow truck driver, he was often on the road and had started to feel ill every time he would eat. After an incident where he passed blood in his stool, he knew it was time to visit the doctor who suggested a colonoscopy. They found a tumor in his colon, and a CT scan revealed that the cancer had spread to his lymph nodes, liver, and the bottom part of his lungs. The news that he had colon cancer came as a complete surprise to David and his wife, Connie. He recalls, "The doctor said you've got stage IV, buddy. There were a few tears, and we were absolutely scared to death."

David was referred to an oncologist in Grandbury who quickly started him on a clinical trial which showed

positive results, and his cancer remained stable for nearly a year. Once he stopped responding to the treatment, his doctor knew that the best options for David at that point were at Mary Crowley Cancer Research.

In January of 2021, David met with Executive Medical Director Minal Barve, M.D., who explained what trials he qualified for and identified which would be best to start. The clinical trial experience was much easier on David than previous treatments, and he quickly began responding. While his former protocols saw him taking 5 – 6 drugs and left him feeling unwell, his clinical trial made him feel more like himself again.

More than anything, David loves the experience of coming to Mary Crowley Cancer Research and the bonds he has formed with both the team and fellow patients. "All the staff at Mary Crowley, the doctors, the nurses, every one of them is wonderful. I love going because I get to see everybody there." David brings a smile to everyone at the clinic and remains positive throughout his treatment experience. His wife Connie, a

school counselor, almost always accompanies him, "she's been right there with me every step of the way."

David is currently between trials and looking forward to starting again. "I'm dedicated to getting better with the help of the good lord, my wife, my family, and all my friends. I'm truly blessed with all the prayers and people pulling for me. I'm just an old country boy, and when I start out on something, I get it done. I started out on this deal, and I'm gonna fix it. I'm not giving up. I'm gonna give it all I got to the very end."

With his wife, two daughters and their husbands, and his beloved grandchildren behind him, he is full of hope for the next step in his journey at Mary Crowley Cancer Research saying, "I've still got this cancer, but it is what it is. If you're fighting cancer, there's not a better place to go. I'll stay here as long as they'll have me!"



*David and his granddaughter Berkley*

## Restructuring: A Team Approach

Mary Crowley Cancer Research has recently launched a new model for our clinical research teams. This structural change is aimed at streamlining internal processes for improved communication and quality overall, as well as increasing synergy, and providing new opportunities and career advancement for team members.

Each team is led by an Advanced Practice Provider, Clinical Research Nurse, and Mentor Manager, then broken into two sub-teams, including a Clinical Trial Manager or Clinical Trial Lead, Pharmacist, Clinical Research Coordinator, Regulatory Specialist, and Data Coordinator. Each sub-team is responsible for 12 – 15 studies, allowing them to be trial experts.

After five new teams were created and training was complete, the new team-based structure was fully implemented in August of this year. Research Data Manager Christy Lacy was thrilled about the new direction saying, "The whole time I have been at Mary Crowley (10+ years), there has always been a "Clinic" side and a "Central" side. The Clinic has always been patient-focused, and the Central office has been more research-focused. When the Central offices were located downtown, there was a physical distance that added to the feeling of two different teams. I've long wanted to bridge the gap and get us to come together as one company because we have a common goal of helping provide treatment options for our patients. I hope that the restructure will do just that. The new

team structure will include members of both Clinic and Central who will work together on a set number of trials. This will inevitably lead to increased efficiency, better communication, and a more cohesive working relationship. I'm personally very excited about what we can accomplish when we all come together as one."

We look forward to continuing to put the patient experience first through effective organization and cohesive teams behind the scenes.



*Christy Lacy*



## Welcoming A New CEO

by Deborah Montonen, CFRE

Mary Crowley Cancer Research is pleased to welcome Jon Friedenberg as our new Chief Executive Officer. Mr. Friedenberg succeeds Dr. Merrick Reese, who spent four years in the position before retiring in September of this year.

Jon brings a wealth of experience in healthcare leadership to his new appointment as CEO. Jon is a mission-driven, results-oriented hospital and health system c-suite executive with a track record of uniting teams around a shared purpose to improve clinical outcomes, operational efficiency, financial performance, and patient experience.

"I first learned of the extraordinary work of Mary Crowley Cancer Research when I was invited to a site visit in 2008. It never occurred to me back then that I would have the opportunity to join this exceptional team of clinicians, philanthropists, board members, and staff in their mission to develop the most innovative and promising treatments for cancer patients."

Most recently, Jon was President and Chief Operating Officer of MarinHealth, an award-winning independent, nonprofit, acute care community hospital serving San Francisco Bay Area residents with 319 beds and 29 outpatient clinics. Prior to that, Jon served as the Vice President at El Camino Hospital, an independent,

nonprofit, acute care 443-bed hospital serving Silicon Valley. He was responsible for organizational innovation and strategy designed to address community health needs. During his tenure, Jon co-founded the Fogarty Institute for Innovation with the legendary inventor and cardiovascular surgeon Dr. Tom Fogarty, and was the founder of the Genomic Medicine Institute and the South Asian Heart Center.

Mr. Friedenberg will be leading the development of a new strategic vision and serve as the spokesperson for Mary Crowley in the community. Jon looks forward to working with physicians, the staff, the board, and philanthropic supporters to position Mary Crowley to expand the number of clinical trials and the number of patients enrolled in those trials.

Welcome Jon Friedenberg!



## Pushing Hope

Mary Crowley and Big Hope 1 teamed up for another fun and successful weekend at the Pushing Hope Annual Marine Industry Charity Tournament. Thanks to the efforts of Ceres Barge Line and Ceres Consulting LLC, our friends in the barge industry raised over \$140,000 to support clinical trials at Mary Crowley. The tournament, held August 20-22, brought together members of the barge industry from all over the country to St. Louis, MO, for a fun weekend of golf, softball, and even a welcome seafood boil. We are so grateful to our friends at Ceres and in the barge industry for their continued support to open more clinical trials for cancer patients everywhere.



## Wilson Foundation Grant

The Jasper L. and Jack Denton Wilson Foundation have awarded Mary Crowley with a grant of \$400,000 to open more targeted therapy clinical trials. Targeted therapies are a type of cancer treatment that uses drugs designed to "target" cancer cells without affecting normal cells. They are an important tool in the arsenal of personalized medicine available to oncologists in treating a patient's cancer and will take an increasingly vital role in cancer treatments. The Wilson Foundation has been an important and longtime supporter of Mary Crowley Cancer Research since 2006, awarding over \$6 million in grants. This has allowed us to open over 120 trials and enroll over 600 patients onto those trials.

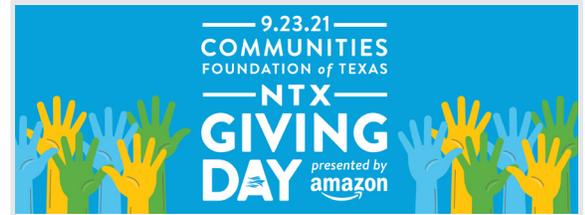
## *Thank you!*

A special thank you to Mary Crowley supporter Marlane Miller for her generous gift of \$100,000! A two-time cancer survivor, Marlane is passionate in her support of cancer research to find more effective, less toxic treatments. Marlane is also a world-renowned relationship expert and author of BrainStyles™: Change Your Life Without Changing Who You Are, which has been translated into five languages and taught in three more.

In the last three years, Marlane has generously donated \$450,000 to Mary Crowley, providing hope to cancer patients and bringing more clinical trials to North Texas.



*Marlane pictured with Minal Barve, M.D.*



Thanks to our supporters, Mary Crowley had a record-breaking year this North Texas Giving Day, raising \$34,143 and tripling the amount we received in 2020! We are especially grateful to Drs. Pamela and Patrick Waters and the Thomas P. Waters Foundation for generously matching \$5,000 in donations with a \$5,000 gift of their own. This banner day would not have been possible without the support and generosity of our donors this and every North Texas Giving Day.

## Communities Foundation Grant

Mary Crowley is honored to have been awarded a \$50,000 grant from Communities Foundation of Texas through their 2021 North Texas Cares-Health and Scientific Research program. These funds will be used to open another combination therapy clinical trial for waiting patients right here in North Texas. North Texas Cares is a common application that is reviewed by a collaboration of funders, including 30 North Texas foundations and United Ways, that have come together to provide support for organizations that work with people and communities most affected by all aspects of COVID-19.



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## 5 Questions with: Tina Nghiem

### *Associate Director of Clinical Trial Development*

#### 1. Where did you grow up?

Dallas! I was actually born at Medical City Dallas many years ago. I would love to see the Cowboys win another Super Bowl.

#### 2. What is your favorite part of your job?

There always seems to be a new actionable target in oncology. I get to learn about these targets, the mechanism of action of the drugs, and how the trials are designed. It's amazing to witness advancements in immunotherapy and targeted therapies.

#### 3. What might surprise people about your role at Mary Crowley?

As it is my role to source clinical trials for Mary Crowley, I am usually the first person to "handle" the trial before it is passed on to subsequent colleagues.

#### 4. What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

Foodie adventures. Experiencing new cuisines with family, friends, and even strangers brings me happiness. During my last trip to Mexico City, I became acquainted with a food blogger from Vancouver. He invited me to join his group on a taco tour for dinner. I'm glad I participated because

it turned out to be an unforgettable adventure of eating (at >15 different stands/restaurants) and storytelling.

#### 5. How will you help bring HOPE to Mary Crowley patients?

My goal is to continue to bring Mary Crowley appropriate phase I and II clinical trials. Thus, Mary Crowley's patients can have early access to investigational agents as novel treatment options.

