



Ring the Bell



**GEORGIA
CANCER CENTER**
AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY

The Augusta University logo, featuring an A-framed bell tower placed in a U-shaped shield, reflects a rich history for the University and for the cancer patients at the Georgia Cancer Center.

Ring the Bell of Hope



In 2019, Augusta University revived the school's historic bell, which now rings at the beginning and end of every graduation ceremony. It celebrates the successful passage of students from the university into the world, with the support of their alma mater always behind them.

Similarly, cancer patients traditionally ring a bell in the cancer center at the conclusion of their cancer treatment. Ringing the bell is an emotional and triumphant celebration of all the patient has accomplished—conquering fear, persevering through uncertainty, enduring adversity and hardship, and hanging on to hope with strength and a strong will to live. When patients ring the bell at the Georgia Cancer Center, they celebrate this tremendous milestone with the knowledge that they have their team at the Georgia Cancer Center to see them through survivorship.

Achievement. Support. Advancement. It's a logo that means so much to so many at the university and at the Georgia Cancer Center.

Each day, more than 100 Georgians learn they have cancer. These newly-diagnosed patients want to know how to get on with treatment – and their normal lives – as quickly as possible. At the Georgia Cancer Center at Augusta University, our patients find the means, motivation and support to fight back. Here, they will join a strong team of healthcare providers who will battle alongside them.

At the Georgia Cancer Center, our mission is to reduce the burden of cancer in the state of Georgia and across the globe through superior care, innovation and education. We work toward this goal one patient at a time. Our greatest success is possible with the support of philanthropic partners who step up to ring the bell of hope.

A wave of positivity is created every time a cancer patient rings a bell at the end of treatment. The ringing bell reminds the patients, their families and everyone present to keep fighting. To keep hoping.

Your support does just that. It lifts the efforts of Georgia Cancer Center physicians, researchers and staff to keep innovating, caring and fighting for our patients. It raises the hopes of patients and families facing a cancer diagnosis. Your donations ring the bell of hope for a better tomorrow for our patients, today and well into the future.

Please join us. And ring that bell.

Our vision, to be a global leader in cancer clinical care, discovery, innovation, translational research, professional education and public awareness, isn't about our own achievements. Reaching our vision rings a bell of hope for all cancer patients in the days and years to come.

Our Vision

and why it matters

Inspired by a history of passion and determination, our vision dates back to the founding of the prestigious Medical College of Georgia (MCG) in 1828. Today, our integration in an academic medical center fosters innovation and learning.

Achieving the vision of the Georgia Cancer Center for all Georgians, as explored in the following pages, will require the support of friends like you who understand the human impact of cancer in our state and beyond.

While more and more people are surviving cancer and Georgia cancer death rates decline every year, the decline is not as rapid nor as deep as we would like it to be. Cancer remains the second leading cause of death in our state. One of every five deaths in Georgia is attributable to cancer.

Our scientific research and compassionate care takes aim at those statistics, working to improve the cancer profile of the state. But our patients are far more than statistics and diagnoses. They are individuals and families, hopes and dreams, determination and fear. And they need you.



Cancer takes the lives of nearly 18,000 Georgian men, women and children each year, and is a life-altering diagnosis for more than 50,000 residents every year. In Georgia this year:

- **8,000 women** will receive a diagnosis of breast cancer.
- **More than 7,000 people** will learn they have lung cancer.
- **Almost 2,000 Georgians**, many of them children, will start their fight against leukemia.
- **Thousands more** will find out they are facing prostate, colorectal, skin, kidney, brain and other cancers.

Rebekah Griffin *Cervical cancer survivor*

When Rebekah Griffin learned she was facing cervical cancer for the second time, her oncologist recommended the Georgia Cancer Center, where she enrolled in a clinical trial for recurrent cervical cancer. She is grateful for the clinical trial, both for the chance it offers her for years with her husband and son, and for the benefit it can provide to other women. "I want to help myself, but also help future generations of cancer patients," Griffin said. "I'm young, I've got my whole life ahead of me. I'm going to do everything I can to improve my chances of reaching long-term remission."



Sylvia Lake *Ovarian cancer survivor and Georgia Cancer Center clinical trial participant*

"I had ovarian cancer for the second time and it metastasized and was all over my body. I was scared and didn't know what to do, but my doctor suggested I go to the Georgia Cancer Center. I was accepted into a clinical trial there, and that trial really saved my life. I'd like to encourage all women to know about the medicines available through clinical trials at the Georgia Cancer Center. It's life-saving!"



Our Mission

and how we will complete it

To accomplish our mission of reducing the burden of cancer in our state, the Georgia Cancer Center at Augusta University is on a journey to National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation. The long-term path toward this significant goal is paved with great strides in the areas of clinical care, research and prevention.

NCI-designated Cancer Centers meet the most rigorous standards for transdisciplinary, state-of-the-art research focused on developing new and better approaches to preventing, diagnosing and treating cancer. NCI Cancer Centers are grant-funded to support deep and diverse scientific innovation for even greater advances in cancer treatment discovery.

Our goals for NCI designation require us to recruit leading cancer researchers and gather crucial support for translational research. We need new cancer scientists from multiple disciplines and research interests, we need to improve our infrastructure, and we need to expand our outreach efforts throughout Georgia. Philanthropic support is essential for reaching this next step in cancer care for Georgia and the surrounding areas.

Three pillars of excellence stand out as the path for the Georgia Cancer Center to reach NCI designation:

- Advancing Scientific Excellence
- Becoming a Destination Center for Cancer Care Excellence
- Meeting the Unique Needs of Our Population at the Cancer Center and in Their Communities

Advancing

Scientific Excellence

The most successful fights against cancer begin in the laboratory. In 2018, we opened the \$62.5 million expansion of the M. Bert Storey Research Building on our campus, with significant support from our philanthropic partners.

Researchers conduct scientific discovery throughout four floors of open-concept laboratory space, using cutting-edge equipment and shared resources. A three-story collaborator connector from the research building to our outpatient cancer clinic fosters communication between clinicians and researchers.

This research center and connector illustrate our commitment to a discovery-to-treatment culture.

At the Georgia Cancer Center, we focus on bringing the latest in scientific breakthroughs directly to cancer patients. Our researchers make new discoveries at the laboratory bench and translate research into practice through clinical trials and the eventual transition into the clinic as new options for our patients.

Our approach to cancer research mirrors important National Cancer Institute goals:

- Ensuring every cancer patient has access to the newest and most innovative cancer trials in the nation.
- Clinicians and researchers working together to design and conduct new research protocols based on the clinicians' expert understanding of the important clinical problems and the researchers' knowledge of the biology of the tumors.
- Each cancer patient receiving personalized treatment through the interaction of the multi-disciplinary team of clinicians and health professionals.



Scientific leadership thrives here

Bio-Repository Alliance of Georgia for Oncology

The center's Bio-Repository Alliance of Georgia for Oncology houses blood and tissue samples collected around the state for use in cancer research. This is an invaluable statewide resource to conduct the necessary studies to better understand cancer, its diversity, its biology and the way it responds to or resists therapy.

Augusta OncoTarget

Augusta OncoTarget at the Georgia Cancer Center provides scientifically sound and personalized therapy. This next-generation sequencing enables large numbers of genes, and an unprecedented number of known cancer-causing variants, to be tested simultaneously in a patient's biopsy sample. IBM Watson for Genomics then performs, within minutes, a worldwide analysis that matches the patient's gene variants (relevant to cancer) with available cancer drugs and clinical trials available that may be designed to target the abnormalities identified, providing a truly personalized approach to cancer therapy.

Immunotherapy

Immunotherapy focuses on treatments designed to take advantage of the body's own defenses to battle tumors. Investigators at the Georgia Cancer Center have identified some of the ways the cancer cells escape the immune system and are developing treatments that may help the immune system overcome this blockade and eliminate cancer.

CML Treatment Advances

Georgia Cancer Center Director Jorge Cortes, M.D. played a key role in developing many new treatment options for patients battling chronic myeloid leukemia (CML), significantly increasing survival rates. The new drugs helped patients who had stopped responding to traditional CML treatment, giving them new options.

Advancing Scientific Excellence

Hope for children with cancer

Perhaps the most innovative, and poignant, use of immunotherapy at the Georgia Cancer Center is with our littlest patients. The Georgia Cancer Center is the only cancer center in the nation offering a pediatric clinical trial for the immunotherapy drug Indoximod to children diagnosed with brain cancer. **This immunotherapy protocol was developed here at the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University. Patients from all over the world are now coming to Augusta to enroll in this clinical trial.**

Exciting discoveries are happening at the Georgia Cancer Center. Yet opportunities await for even more breakthroughs, some possible only with donor support.



Amazing Gracie touches lives during cancer journey

In the summer of 2016, 8-year-old Gracie Scott spent her days in tiny McColl, South Carolina, as a warm-hearted girl who loved camping, fishing and riding four-wheelers as much as she loved gymnastics, nail polish and anything pink. She also began experiencing worsening headaches. On Halloween Day, Gracie had an MRI to rule out any other issues before starting on migraine medication. On November 1, she sat in a pediatric oncologist's office with her parents and learned she had Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (DIPG) – the very worst kind of brain tumor.

“You just sit there in disbelief, numb, a million thoughts running through your head,” remembers her mom, Victoria. “I asked questions several different ways thinking I was going to get a different answer than the ones they were giving, but it was the same answer with each question.” The answer was that this tumor was lethal – and untreatable.

The Scotts' local cancer center could not offer what Gracie would need. With no doors opening, a friend opened a window to Dr. Theodore Johnson and the Georgia Cancer Center, and soon the family arrived

in Augusta. “Dr. Johnson and his wonderful team immediately started Gracie into his trial,” says Victoria. “They all were kind and full of compassion and love. For the first time in weeks we had hope, and we knew this was where we were supposed to be.”

Gracie did well with the treatments and had several good months, but then it was clear she was experiencing new tumor growth. With no good options for treatment, Gracie entered hospice. Her mom remembers the team at the Georgia Cancer Center and the Children's Hospital of Georgia as dedicated to keeping Gracie comfortable, and the child life specialists as being a blessing to Gracie and her siblings.

Those extra months “meant everything to us,” Victoria said. “That's moments and memories we were able to make that we will have with us for the rest of our lives.”

Determined to help further the innovative therapy her late daughter benefited from, Victoria founded Gracie's Hope. This charity is already helping to support pediatric immunotherapy research at the Georgia Cancer Center.



Philanthropic Priorities for Scientific Excellence:



- **Increasing Research Funds** – Government funding supports only a minute fraction of important projects and is increasingly difficult to secure. As of 2019, only approximately 8% of grants submitted to NCI nationwide were funded. This is clearly not enough when you are trying to win a battle against an enemy as mighty as cancer. We need start-up funds to expand our clinical trials infrastructure and portfolio so that every patient can have access to the most innovative therapies being developed, and we need endowed Chairs to recruit more senior clinical research faculty. Some examples of research areas of focus include:
 - Expanding research into checkpoint inhibitors which are drugs that help the body overcome a cancer cell's defenses to escape the immune system. We must build on our research strengths in immuno-oncology.
 - Boosting molecular mapping of each cancer to pinpoint the most effective treatment, increasing patient access to clinical trials.
- Developing a dedicated **Clinical and Translational Research Center (CTRC)** to provide a centralized, multidisciplinary space to coordinate and conduct clinical research, including nursing and lab support and sample collection.
- **Creating a Faculty Mentorship Program** – Mentorship plays a critical role in faculty development. Helping young researchers now will benefit many more patients in the future.
- **Tumor Registry Development** – Establish a tumor registry for all patients at the Georgia Cancer Center. This would allow for cancer statistics to be pulled by zip code, rural vs. urban areas, etc.
- **Cancer characterization** – Expand our ability to identify the molecular abnormalities present on every cancer and on every patient with the newest methodology so we can better define the prognosis and identify treatment options that may offer the best possibility of a favorable outcome.

Becoming a Destination Center for Cancer Care

Excellence

The Georgia Cancer Center knows that all the leading-edge therapies available cannot erase the fear and disruption of life that cancer brings to every patient and family. Ringing a bell of understanding means investing in robust patient care programs that can make the cancer journey more bearable, and, at the same time, build a destination center for cancer care excellence.

Patient-Centered, Coordinated Cancer Care

Our approach puts patients at the center of our multi-disciplinary teams to look at their cancer diagnosis and treatment options through a variety of lenses. Our philosophy is that we never treat just a patient's cancer. We offer help for their emotional, mental, physical, social, spiritual and financial needs.

Each cancer treatment team is a group of dedicated clinical specialists who work together to provide expert clinical and compassionate care for improved outcomes. Multi-disciplinary services include medical oncology, radiation oncology, surgical oncology, imaging and diagnostics, physician clinics and patient support services such as psychology, social work, rehabilitation, nutrition, nursing and patient/family education.

By gathering these groups of experts together regularly through a web-based multidisciplinary meeting called a tumor board, our affiliated centers or non-affiliated partners can participate in recommendations for diagnosis and treatment. During those meetings we also discuss any potential clinical trial available to every patient to ensure that the most appropriate treatment option is offered, whether it is standard or experimental.

A nurse navigator is the heartbeat of the team, ensuring the best, most expedient care possible. They are experts in their assigned patient's cancer, whether it's breast, gastrointestinal, gynecological, head and neck, genitourinary, neurologic, thoracic or blood cancer.

Patient-centered care also means being seen by the medical, radiation and surgical oncologist in clinic at the same time and in the same places; all adult appointments take place in the outpatient cancer center – the Georgia Cancer Center Clinical Cancer Care Building.

With design input from cancer patients and their families, our Clinical Cancer Care Building offers 30 exam rooms, six private treatment rooms, clinical research areas where patients can participate in clinical trials, and an open second-floor state-of-the-art infusion area featuring natural light and overlooking a rooftop garden.

Children and adolescents receive care at the Children's Hospital of Georgia (CHOG), located on the same campus as the Georgia Cancer Center. CHOG boasts some of the finest pediatric hematology and oncology researchers and physicians in the nation at its Pediatric Cancer and Blood Disorder Center.



Great-grandfather finds hope and healing

When a persistent sore throat revealed itself to be cancer, Nelson Brooks' doctor sent him straight to Georgia Cancer Center. Soon this great-grandfather who had been a self-described "Energizer Bunny" was thrust into a regimen of daily radiation and weekly chemotherapy. When warned the treatments to kill a form of tonsil cancer would be very hard on him, he responded, "Load the wagon, the mule can pull it."

Nelson remembers all the staff at the Georgia Cancer Center fondly...the nurse who saved him from a serious reaction to a drug, the oncologist who told him he was special, the "shrink" who helped him sleep, the "superb and comprehensive" nurse navigator. "They were honest, frank and told me what to expect," he says. "GCC also has two skilled dietitians who coached my wife and me about cooking and nutrition. GCC also assigned me to a speech therapist who gave me tortuous exercises to do, so my throat would not forget how to swallow. This helped save my life."

Nelson has been cancer free since 2017. He still comes to the Georgia Cancer Center regularly for follow-up visits. "Everybody there was my support service, from the moment I walked in," Nelson says. "They get involved with their patients, not just on a medical level, but on a personal level. They make you feel loved."



Philanthropic Priorities for Becoming a Destination Center:

- **Expand Clinical Cancer Center** – The third floor of the existing building is available for finishing and expansion to accommodate a Women's Cancer Center with dedicated Infusion and Clinical Trials space. Currently, the GCC has one of the most active clinical trials programs in the region for women with gynecological and breast cancers, including first in human phase 1 trials and immunotherapy.
- **Relocation of Georgia Radiation Therapy Center (GRTC)** – GRTC houses all of AU Medical Center and the Children's Hospital of Georgia's radiation therapy modalities. The building was constructed in the late 1970s. Our first phase of renovations added the ability to provide sedation for diagnosis and treatment radiation, especially important for pediatric patients. Ideally, the GRTC would best serve patients and families with a modern, comfortable Ambulatory Care Center for adults and children, at a location closer to the Cancer Research and Outpatient buildings. The new center would provide optimum comfort and convenience for patients and families and critical efficiencies for physicians and staff.
- **Create Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplant Center** – Currently, only our adult hospital offers bone marrow transplants (BMT). Our young patients with this need must have this procedure done elsewhere – often uprooting families and making an already difficult situation more so. We need expert clinicians, equipment and dedicated beds for this specific and essential service.
- **Enhance Patient Programs** – Recruit clinicians to expand our services and expertise in critical areas such as neuro-oncology and others, and create programs to add services in palliative care, psycho-oncology and survivorship.
- **Cerner Oncology/Oncology scheduling software** – New software will assist with more efficient management and utilization of space/chairs in the infusion suite and help patients with their scheduling and navigation needs.
- **Offering Patient Lodging** – Patients who travel to Augusta to participate in clinical trials require overnight accommodations. Ideally, we would like to offer nearby, affordable or even free options, especially for those patients undergoing special treatments or those with unique needs.

The Georgia Cancer Center believes in ringing the bell for all. We have developed outreach programs designed to address the specific challenges that our state and the Southeast region face such as health and lifestyle differences, lack of access to preventative screenings, and limited treatment options and access to cutting-edge clinical research. We also address racial disparities in cancer diagnosis and treatment outcomes.

Meeting the Unique Needs of

Our Communities

Lung, colorectal, breast and prostate cancer account for 51 percent of all cancer deaths in Georgia, and lung cancer accounts for more deaths than colon, breast and prostate combined. Lung and prostate cancer mortality rates in Georgia are nearly 16 percent higher than the national average (Georgia Comprehensive Cancer Registry, 2013). Other types of cancer resulting in death are pancreatic cancer, ovarian cancer, leukemia and lymphoma. Black men in Georgia are diagnosed with prostate cancer almost twice as often as white men in Georgia, and die of their disease three times more often than white men in Georgia. Black women in Georgia have almost the same incidence of breast cancer as white women in Georgia, but they die of their disease 47 percent more often.

There are also clear disparities in the burden of cancer between the urban and rural parts of the state. Statewide maps highlight these disparities, showing the highest mortality rates in rural regions of Georgia. Men living in

rural areas are more likely to die from lung cancer than men in more urban parts of the state, which follows patterns of tobacco use and the absence of protections from secondhand smoke. The advances in chronic myeloid leukemia that have resulted in a near normal life expectancy for those with access to adequate care, have not reached a large percentage of Georgians who continue having the same poor prognosis that was prevalent in the 1970s.

The Georgia Cancer Center is committed to attacking these shocking disparities. There is so much more we can and should do to better understand the biologic differences of cancer in minorities, to bring early detection and excellent treatment to underserved populations, and to make cancer survivorship a reality to all the communities we serve.

The c-CARE initiative works to improve cancer outcomes in underserved communities with a community-based approach. It is sustainable because it collaborates with the communities it serves. The Georgia Cancer Center



“Covelli Enterprises/Panera Bread has a promise to strengthen the communities we serve. Partnering with the Georgia Cancer Center allows us to do this because the funds we donate to the organization through our Pink Ribbon Bagel Campaign go back to research and patient care, helping save and improve lives, giving hope to our community.”

Danielle Covelli, pictured third from right Marketing Coordinator SC/GA for Covelli Enterprises Franchisee of Panera Bread, LLC.



Philanthropic Priorities for Meeting the Unique Needs of our Communities:

Together we can ring a bell of hope in neighborhoods that have never had hope before by supporting:

- **Mobile Screening Units** – Purchase and run mobile units to travel to underserved communities to offer cancer screenings, particularly in the areas of breast, colon and prostate cancer.
- **Community Outreach** – Develop programs to deliver prevention and cancer education materials statewide.
- **The Biology of Cancer Disparities** – Expand our ability to identify molecular, environmental and other characteristics that put patients at risk and identify the molecular characteristics of their tumors that make them more aggressive.





**GEORGIA
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**M. Bert Storey
Research Building**



The Storey Family (left to right): Barrett Blackburn, Shelby Storey Blackburn, Lang Storey, Beth Storey, Barry Storey, Nan Storey Easterlin, Ed Easterlin, Mallie Easterlin, Clara Easterlin, Ward Easterlin

M. Bert Storey family: A legacy of giving

After M. Bert Storey lost his beloved wife Barbara to cancer, he saw firsthand the need at the time to seek higher-level care far from home. It's a challenge he experienced himself when he later developed cancer. Despite their family's medical struggles, Bert was most troubled, always, by the suffering of others.

"My dad loved to find solutions to problems," said his daughter, Nan Easterlin. "He was a giver, a server and was always thinking of others. He knew he could do something to improve the lives of others."

Bert thought that if Augusta could have a first-class cancer center, it would ease the barriers to care that people were experiencing in eastern Georgia and western South Carolina. "Our family firmly believes that the Georgia

Cancer Center is well-positioned to address the increasing needs of these areas," said his son, Barry Storey. Barry and Nan are continuing their dad's legacy of supporting the development of National Cancer Institute status for the Georgia Cancer Center at Augusta University.

"Our parents were great examples to us of supporting programs to assist those in need. It's important for the local citizenry to support the Georgia Cancer Center in any and every manner possible," Barry said.

"The new M. Bert Storey Research Building fulfills Dad's vision, and we are so glad he was able to view the building during the last phases of construction before he passed away," said Nan. "My brother and I are delighted to continue his vision by supporting the Georgia Cancer Center."

A gift to The Georgia Cancer Center is a gesture of hope. It is hope that the men, women and children with cancer and their families need most. Hope for survival. Hope for quality of life. Hope for the future. Just as ringing the bell after treatment ends is a ringing statement of hope for a life beyond cancer.

Ring the Bell for Generations

Ring the bell to fuel research that leads us to the next generation of more successful treatment for cancer.

Ring the bell to recruit the researchers and fund the clinical trials needed to push into that next frontier in cancer survivorship.

Ring the bell to offer better care and gentler cancer treatments that reduce the risk of complications and increase our patients' quality of life.

Ring the bell for underserved communities, bringing cancer research, education and diagnosis and reducing the death rates in these areas.

Together with your support, we can ring the bell of hope for generations of patients at the Georgia Cancer Center.

The cancer patients of Georgia – and beyond – thank you for your interest in helping more people with cancer live longer, better lives.

For more information about making hope happen through philanthropic support of the Georgia Cancer Center, contact:

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Our mission at the Georgia Cancer Center is to reduce the burden of cancer in the state of Georgia and across the globe through superior care, innovation and education.

It is a lofty goal, yet imminently achievable with the right support. I came to direct the Georgia Cancer Center because of its tremendous capacity for research, treatment, and patient and family support. Rarely do you see a cancer center with such commitment to research and discovery with a truly global impact, yet so dedicated to personalized treatment and compassionate care for patients and families.

In these pages, you have learned about an exceptional team of doctors, researchers and clinical staff devoted to the science and clinical care that turn fear into hope for our patients and their families. Cancer can never defeat the human spirit. Our spirit of scientific innovation, clinical excellence and patient-centered care joins with the indefatigable spirit of our patients and families to overwhelm and overpower cancer.

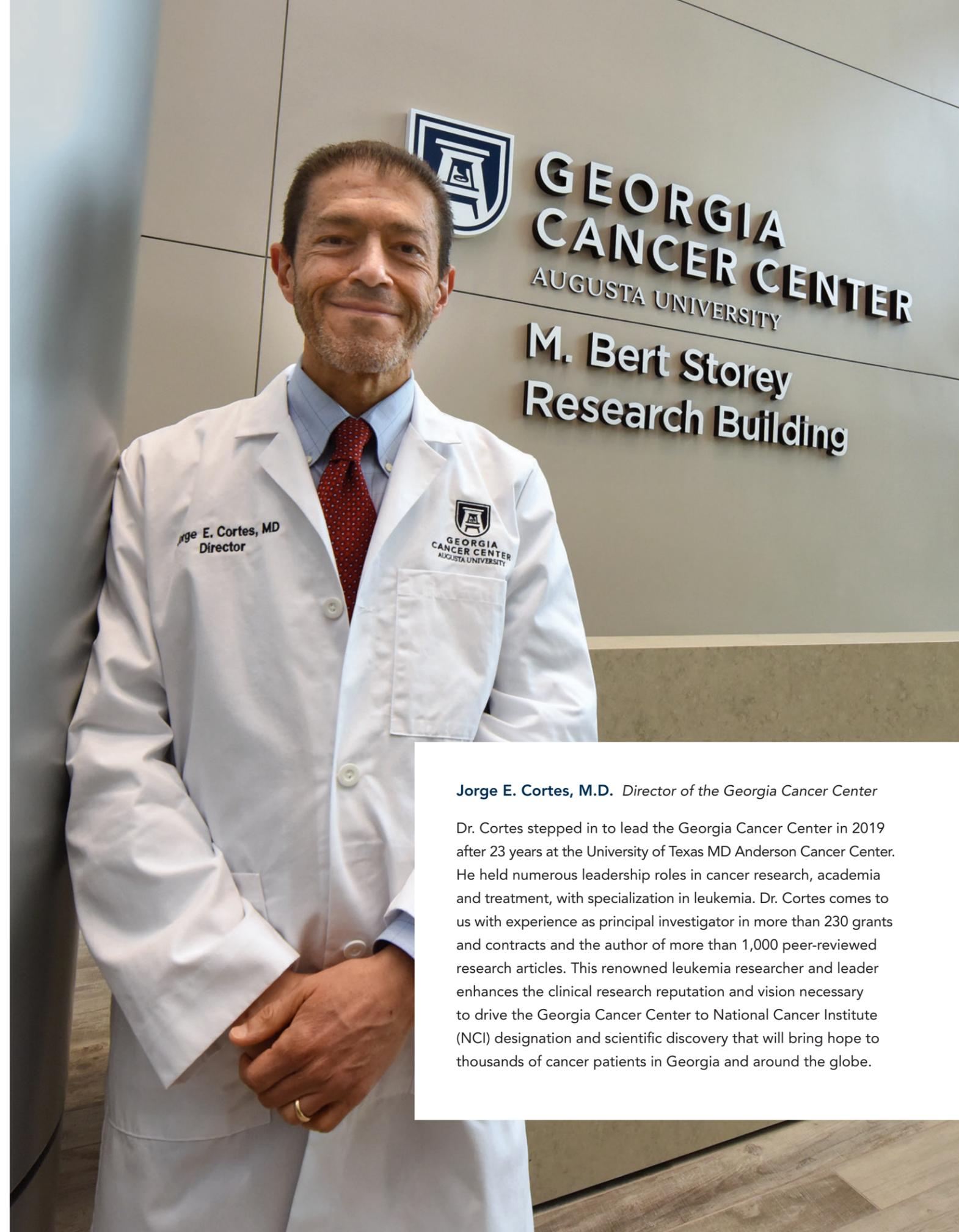
We know the unanswered problems in cancer treatment, and we know what it will take to solve them. What we need are partners in our communities – individuals, organizations and corporations who are willing to ring the bells of hope with contributions to the Georgia Cancer Center. Together, we can create new research programs, expand treatment facilities and attract leading doctors and researchers needed to make our patients even stronger against cancer.

With your help, patients with cancer, both children and adult, can participate in the most innovative clinical trials right here in Augusta and take advantage of the latest advances in cancer care to give them their best chance at life. You can also be a part of our continued quest to have state-of-the-art facilities and equipment that offer patients the best opportunity to beat cancer in an environment that helps minimize their struggles. Families in underserved areas of Georgia can find and treat their cancer early thanks to mobile screening and education units that reach the most vulnerable communities in Georgia. We also need to give access to clinical trials to those who have no opportunity because of lack of insurance or because their insurance policies do not allow this option. And so much more.

So join us. Ring a bell for hope that will echo across our communities for generations to come. Make a gift that can make a lasting difference.

Thank you.

Jorge E. Cortes, M.D.
Director of the Georgia Cancer Center



Jorge E. Cortes, M.D. *Director of the Georgia Cancer Center*

Dr. Cortes stepped in to lead the Georgia Cancer Center in 2019 after 23 years at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. He held numerous leadership roles in cancer research, academia and treatment, with specialization in leukemia. Dr. Cortes comes to us with experience as principal investigator in more than 230 grants and contracts and the author of more than 1,000 peer-reviewed research articles. This renowned leukemia researcher and leader enhances the clinical research reputation and vision necessary to drive the Georgia Cancer Center to National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation and scientific discovery that will bring hope to thousands of cancer patients in Georgia and around the globe.



augusta.edu/cancer