

USC Norris Celebrates 40 Years

On October 11, the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center marked its 40th anniversary with a gala anniversary celebration, “40 Years of Progress—Discovering New Cures.” The event recognized USC Norris’ tremendous advances over the past four decades, and raised nearly \$2 million to support additional research. One of the eight original comprehensive cancer centers in the United States, USC Norris has pioneered revolutionary surgical techniques and cancer treatments, and furthered our understanding of the underlying causes of the disease.



1 Pioneering scientist James Watson (center) and USC Distinguished Professor Peter Jones (right) joined Dr. Stephen Gruber (left), director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, at the celebration. In 1962, with Drs. Francis Crick and Maurice Wilkins, Dr. Watson was honored with a Nobel Prize for discovering the double helix structure of DNA. Professor Jones stands as a renowned epigenetics researcher at the Keck School of Medicine, and at the gala, Dr. Watson and he were saluted as the respective “fathers of modern genetics and modern epigenetics.”

2 Keck School Dean Carmen Puliafito (left) and Harlyne Norris (center), trustee of USC and the Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation, with actor and comedian Martin Short (right), who served as master of ceremonies.

3 During the evening, Martin Short poignantly discussed his personal connection to the cancer center and its mission, remembering friends and family members who had succumbed to the disease.

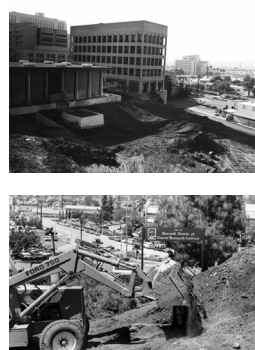
PHOTOS BY STEVE COHN

Milestones : 40 Years of Growth and Development

1970



9.21.1978
Kenneth Norris Jr. presents \$4 million gift to name the cancer center the Kenneth Norris Jr. Cancer Research Institute.



5.10.1979
Ground is broken for the new site of the USC Norris Cancer Hospital and Research Institute.

1980



1980
Peter Jones, distinguished professor of urology and biochemistry & molecular biology, and his research team discover the benefits of the epigenetic drug azacitidine for leukemia patients. The drug caused profound changes in gene expression and inhibited DNA methylation (chemicals that can lock and silence genes).

2.3.1983
USC Norris Cancer Hospital is dedicated.

1985

Robert Seeger, professor of pediatrics at USC-affiliated Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, discovers molecular markers for neuroblastoma can be used to predict a patient’s survival. This discovery was one of the first examples of personalized medicine.

1986

Professor emeritus Donald Skinner, former chair of the Catherine and Joseph Aresty Department of Urology, leads a team that improves bladder cancer surgical techniques, which allow patients to void naturally through their urethras.

1990

1988

Brian Henderson, Distinguished Professor of Preventive Medicine and Neurology, discovers links between steroid hormones and prostate, breast and ovarian cancers. This breakthrough paved the way for new hormonal therapies, including tamoxifen (breast cancer) and lupron (prostate cancer), and revealed the protective benefits of the contraceptive pill against ovarian and endometrial cancer.

1991

First Annual Festival of Life held.



4 At the gala, Dr. Gruber (right) presented two new awards that recognize outstanding leadership. Harlyne Norris (center) and her daughter Lisa Hansen (left), chair of the Norris Foundation, were the inaugural recipients of the Founder's Award. Established in 1963, the Norris Foundation is a not-for-profit foundation that has demonstrated extraordinary philanthropic support toward USC.



5 USC trustee and benefactor Ming Hsieh '83, MS '84 and his wife, Eva, were honored with the inaugural Visionary Award. In 2010, the Hsiehs committed a landmark gift to USC that established the Ming Hsieh Institute for Research on Engineering Medicine for Cancer, which supports research and development in the burgeoning field of nanomedicine for cancer.



PHOTO BY PIERSON CLAIR/USC ATHLETICS

6 Harlyne Norris (center, right) and Lisa Hansen (center, left) of the Norris Foundation were honored during the USC-Arizona football game on October 11, for their longstanding support of USC's fight against cancer. USC President C. L. Max Nikias (right) and Dr. Gruber (left) joined them on the field.



7 Dr. G. Denman Hammond, the founding director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, and his granddaughter Mira Hammond, an MPA student at the USC Price School of Public Policy.

8 Randy Newman ended the evening on an energetic note, treating attendees to three of his most well-known songs: "You've Got a Friend in Me," "Political Science," and "I Love L.A."

ALL PHOTOS EXCEPT 6 BY STEVE COHN

1995



1996
USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center expands with the addition of the Norman Topping Tower.

1997

Henrietta C. Lee makes lead gift to establish the Harold E. and Henrietta C. Lee Breast Center, a 5,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art research and treatment facility located on the first floor of the USC Norris Cancer Hospital.

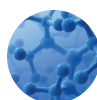


2005



2007

The Cancer Center adds to its research capabilities by opening the Harlyne J. Norris Cancer Research Tower.



2008

Michael Lieber, professor of pathology, biochemistry and molecular biology, molecular microbiology and biological sciences, defines the key mechanisms for DNA changes in lymphoma.

2008

USC Epigenome Center opens. Epigenetics is the study of how DNA is packaged and modified in the cell without changing the sequences of the genes but in changing their availabilities to be turned on or off.

2010

USC Center for Molecular Pathways and Drug Discovery Center opens. Led by Michael Kahn, Provost's Professor of Medicine and Pharmacy, and Heinz-Josef Lenz, professor of medicine and preventive medicine at the Keck School, the program aims to treat cancer and other diseases by discovering and modulating cellular communication pathways.

2012

Peter Jones, distinguished professor of urology and biochemistry & molecular biology, and his research team identify specific genes that must be turned off in order for cancer cells to survive.

