



Paying it Forward

Paul Kelly, Yale Cancer Center Board Member

How did Paul Kelly come to serve two decades on the Yale Cancer Center (YCC) Director's Advisory Board? It all started with a gala. When he was asked to join the board in 1999, Mr. Kelly, CEO and President of Knox & Co., an investment banking firm, attended La Cassa Magica, Yale Cancer Center's annual black-tie benefit featuring cabaret-style entertainment. "The evening was just wonderful, featuring singers with tremendous voices," he said. "I joke that I said yes to the board to make sure I could keep going to La Cassa Magica!"

Naturally, there was a greater underlying motivation in Mr. Kelly's acceptance of the board's invitation. Just a year earlier, he had been treated for prostate cancer. "My PSA numbers were within a few points of that cutoff where nobody wants to take you on because of the expectations of what the outcome may be," Mr. Kelly explained. He sought treatment in New York City at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. After a prostatectomy, Mr. Kelly received a clean bill of health. "I wish for everyone to have as simple a case as mine turned out to be."

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Mr. Kelly appreciated his high caliber of care and was impressed by the advances in cancer treatment being pioneered locally at Yale. He wanted to support Yale Cancer Center philanthropically—and the Director's Advisory Board provided the perfect opportunity to do so. "I've been so pleased to be part of a place where the growth of advanced technologies in cancer control is a priority," he said. "It has been rewarding to see so many developments over the past 20 years; I know we'll see even more of them in the years ahead."

Mr. Kelly and his fellow members of Yale Cancer Center's Director's Advisory Board support the Center's initiatives in a number of ways. "The board acts as a sounding board for the director," explained Julie Parr, Yale Cancer Center's Senior Director of Development. "They also are ambassadors to external constituents. They lead the philanthropic charge of the Cancer Center. They help make connections to people who might be interested in the Center and they prioritize Yale Cancer Center philanthropically."

Mr. Kelly directs his significant annual contributions to the Yale Cancer Center Director's Fund, a crucial source of funding for the Center's top priorities. "The fund enables the director to respond to the most urgent needs of the Center," Ms. Parr explained. "Dr. Fuchs

can direct attention and resources to unique or new research projects that show tremendous promise."

"Through the generous and gracious support of Paul Kelly and others, Yale Cancer Center is able to remain at the forefront of cancer care and research," said Charles S. Fuchs, MD, MPH, Director of Yale Cancer Center and Physician-in-Chief of Smilow Cancer Hospital. "His generous commitment to Yale Cancer Center's Director's Fund is a profound expression of his loyalty and confidence in our work."

During Mr. Kelly's tenure, the board served a critical role in raising the funds needed to build the state-of-the-art Smilow Cancer Hospital. The 14-story, 500,000-square-foot facility has now been serving patients for a decade. With the board's support, Yale Cancer Center also was able to expand to West Campus, launch the Cancer Biology Institute, and open new Smilow Cancer Hospital Care Centers across the state.

Drawing on his decades of business expertise, Mr. Kelly sees the clinical expansion as crucial to helping Yale Cancer Center and Smilow Cancer Hospital stay ahead of the curve. "You see smaller organizations affiliating with leading hospitals from out of state," he said. "Such branding can give a business a big boost. Yale is really the only hometown game in this

market. By expanding our facilities and opening clinics around the region, you're solidifying Yale's standing in Connecticut and providing the best care available to the people who need it."

Mr. Kelly himself connected a person desperately in need of care with Smilow Cancer Hospital's cutting-edge treatments. One day a friend told him about an acquaintance in her forties who had developed a rare form of cancer and was given six weeks to live. The description of her condition reminded Mr. Kelly of something he had heard at a recent board meeting—the hiring of a new researcher whose trailblazing immunotherapy work might benefit this ailing woman. Through his contacts, Mr. Kelly was able to get the woman an appointment. She began immunotherapy treatment, and within weeks her symptoms subsided. An amazing connection that happened by chance led to life-saving treatment right in Connecticut.

"You think about how many other people are in that situation, of possibly being able to overcome something thought to be insurmountable," Mr. Kelly said. "It adds to the call, the feeling that you want to be a part of this. Yale Cancer Center does exceedingly good work, and I'm very grateful to have the opportunity to be a part of what they are accomplishing." ☺