

LEGACY OF HOPE.

SPRING 2018



A CHARITABLE AND GIFT PLANNING GUIDE FOR THE BARBARA ANN KARMANOS CANCER INSTITUTE



John F. Martin Photography

ON THE SHOULDERS OF A GIANT

DR. VEE'S ENDURING LEGACY

Simply put, cancer care in Detroit would not have ascended to its present heights without the late Vainutis Vaitkevicius, M.D., M.A.C.P.

For more than five decades, he treated patients with great compassion, led colleagues with bold determination, taught generations of oncologists, and blazed the path forward for advanced cancer treatments and research at the Karmanos Cancer Institute. Tributes to the beloved physician—known affectionately as “Dr. Vee”—continue after his passing on December 24, 2017, at age 90.

“Dr. Vee laid the groundwork for our center,” says Joseph Uberti, M.D., Ph.D., a longtime Karmanos colleague. “He started his medical career when oncology was in its infancy, barely recognized as an independent field of medicine. However, he kept his resolve to build it into the field it is now. He knew this would be the way to improve care for patients.”

Patients and family members also remember Dr. Vee's great kindness and empathy, no matter how difficult the prognosis.

“Dr. Vee went out of his way to help his patients—even those diagnosed too late,” says WXYZ-TV Reporter Simon Shaykhet. Dr. Vee treated Shaykhet's mother, Zina, for pancreatic cancer until her death from the disease in 2003 at age 47. “He brought a lot of humanity to cancer care and had a very personal touch, whether sharing a laugh or just listening to his patients. He also leaves an outstanding legacy for physicians. He showed how to care for patients physically and emotionally.”

That seemingly limitless compassion stems from a childhood that was torn apart during World War II. Born in Lithuania in

Continued on next page

➤ **Dr. Vainutis Vaitkevicius, or Dr. Vee, is remembered for his great kindness and empathy.**

“We must continue Dr. Vee's legacy. His shoulders are strong enough to carry us all.”

– Joseph Uberti, M.D., Ph.D.



CANCER INSTITUTE

Wayne State University

YOU CAN EXTEND DR. VEE'S LEGACY.

In addition to his caring bedside manner and brilliant research career, Dr. Vee leaves behind a legacy unmatched in metro Detroit medicine.

You can help preserve and extend Dr. Vee's rich legacy and further his deep commitment to exemplary patient care by supporting the Dr. Vainutis K. Vaitkevicius Endowed Chair in Cancer Research and becoming a member of the Dr. Vee Legacy of Hope Society.

Gifts supporting the Vaitkevicius Endowment will enable the named Chair to pursue cutting-edge research initiatives that have the potential to deliver more effective treatments for all cancer types. Dr. Vee's endowment fund will support cancer research in perpetuity, ensuring that his legacy of inspiring hope for cancer patients and their families continues into the future.

The Legacy of Hope Society honors special friends who include the Karmanos Cancer Institute in their will or estate plan. Just let us know that you are including Karmanos so we can welcome you as a new member and invite you to our appreciation luncheon. You do not need to indicate an amount.

➤ **To learn more about these giving opportunities or to create your own legacy, contact the Karmanos Office of Planned Giving at 313.576.8102.**

ON THE SHOULDERS OF A GIANT

Continued from front page

1927, young Vainutis was a musical prodigy who dreamed of becoming a concert pianist. At age 13, he became separated from his family when the Soviet Union invaded Lithuania and began mass arrests of dissenters.

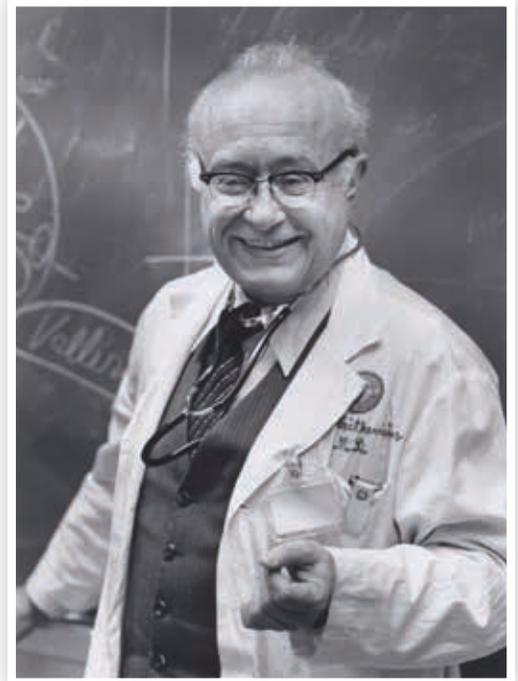
Vainutis found refuge with his grandfather (a physician and botanist) and an aunt (a prominent Lithuanian physician). Both instilled in him a love of science and medicine. By 1944, Vainutis lived in a Lithuanian refugee camp near Frankfurt, Germany. His dreams of performing piano concerts ended when he severely injured a hand while working a steel lathe at the camp.

After the war, Vainutis shifted his focus to medicine. In 1951, he received his medical degree from Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany. While in medical school, he met and married Ingeborg Jansen. The couple had six children and remained married until her death in 2012.

In 1951, Dr. Vee moved to Detroit, where he completed an internship at Grace Hospital. After serving in the Korean War as a captain in the U.S. Army, he completed residencies at Grace and Detroit Receiving hospitals and received a fellowship in cancer research at the Detroit Institute for Cancer Research, the forerunner to the Michigan Cancer Foundation. By 1962, Dr. Vee had become clinical director of that institution. In addition to serving on the faculty at Wayne State University School of Medicine, he became Michigan Cancer Foundation president in 1991. In many ways, Dr. Vee led its evolution into the center known today as the Karmanos Cancer Institute.

"During those years, Dr. Vee brought together a program of patient care directed at all aspects of cancer therapy," Dr. Uberti says. "This included a basic science group and a translational science group. Together, with the Michigan Cancer Foundation, these entities became the foundation of our National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center—the first in Michigan. Through this, Dr. Vee's legacy flourishes. We're really working in the house Dr. Vee built.

"It is said we must stand on the shoulders of giants to move forward," Dr. Uberti says. "We must continue Dr. Vee's legacy. His shoulders are strong enough to carry us all."



Philip Dattilo Photography

➤ **Dr. Vee laid the groundwork for Karmanos.**

SKY FOUNDATION FUNDING LEADS TO PRESTIGIOUS, MULTI-YEAR RESEARCH GRANT

Asfar Azmi, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Oncology at the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute and Wayne State University School of Medicine, recently secured a prestigious, multi-year \$1,761,375 R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute for his research titled, “Clinical Translation of Nuclear Protein Export inhibitor in Metastatic Pancreatic Cancer.”

The path to receiving the R01 grant was made possible in part by Sky Foundation Inc., which provided initial seed funding for Dr. Azmi. The seed funding helped generate critical data to develop a strong R01 grant application. The foundation has funded Dr. Azmi’s collaborative research efforts since 2015, totaling more than \$122,000. Sky Foundation, based in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., raises awareness and advances research for the early detection and treatment of pancreatic cancer.

“Dr. Azmi’s work represents a significant step forward in finding a more effective treatment for such a challenging disease,” said Gerold Bepler, M.D., Ph.D., president and CEO of the Karmanos Cancer Institute. “We are grateful for organizations like Sky Foundation that help our researchers develop the cancer treatments that other hospitals and health organizations will use in the future.”



➤ Sky Foundation board of directors recently visited Karmanos Cancer Institute to meet with Asfar Azmi, Ph.D., who, with Sky Foundation’s help, secured an R01 grant for his research in pancreatic cancer. Pictured from left to right are Dr. Azmi, assistant professor, Department of Oncology, Karmanos Cancer Institute and Wayne State University School of Medicine; Mary Beth Castorri, Sky Foundation vice president; Sheila Kasselmann, founder, Sky Foundation; Scott Moore, Sky Foundation board member; Anjum Sohail, Ph.D., research scientist, Department of Pathology, Wayne State University School of Medicine; Bruce Gershenson, Sky Foundation board member; and Ramzi M. Mohammad, Ph.D., director GI Cancer Research, Department of Oncology, Karmanos Cancer Institute and Wayne State University School of Medicine.



“It sounds strange, but I’m a better, stronger and happier person after cancer because of Karmanos’ approach to treating the disease and supporting the patient and family. They really care.”

– Howard K., stage 4 pancreatic cancer survivor

HOW ONE SENTENCE CAN SAVE A LIFE

By including a gift to Karmanos in your will, you can support our mission tomorrow without giving away any of your assets today.

Securing the future of patients we serve is as simple as one sentence. If you are ready to include a gift to Karmanos in your will, ask your attorney to add this suggested wording:

I bequeath (the sum of \$_____) or (_____ % residue of my estate) to the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute, located at 4100 John R, Detroit, Michigan, 48201. Tax identification number 38-1613280.



We are happy to show you how your gift can make a difference in the lives of those patients we serve. Please contact the Office of Planned Giving at 313.576.8102.

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MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Every gift begins with an important question: How can I make a difference in the lives of others?

Including our cancer hospital in your will is a thoughtful way to continue your support for the cancer care and research programs at Karmanos Cancer Institute and provide for your family. It is:

- **Affordable.** The actual giving of your gift occurs after your lifetime, so your current income is not affected.
- **Flexible.** Until your will goes into effect, you are free to alter your plans or change your mind.
- **Versatile.** You can give a specific item, a set amount of money or a percentage of your estate. You can also make your gift contingent upon certain events.

Here are three simple ways to put family first while supporting those we serve:

- Gift a percentage of your estate to Karmanos Cancer Institute in your will.
- Leave a percentage of your residual estate (the portion of your estate that remains after all gifts have been made to your beneficiaries and all claims of the estate are satisfied).
- Name us as a beneficiary of a percentage of your life insurance policy or retirement account.

WANT TO ADD KARMANOS TO YOUR EXISTING WILL?

You don't need to create a new will. Simply ask your attorney to prepare a codicil, a document that amends your original will. This is a common way to make minor changes. After making arrangements for your family, consider including Karmanos in your will or estate plan. We are happy to show you how your gift can impact cancer care and help provide a hopeful future for those we serve.

Contact the Office of Planned Giving at 313.576.8102 or knowlesd@karmanos.org and we'll help you get started with creating a plan that protects the important people and causes in your life.



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