

Changing Lives fundraiser nets \$1 million for USC cancer research

By Imelda Valenzuela Fowler

After a meeting with his doctor in May 2010, Jeff Small, president and chief operating officer of DreamWorks Studios, found himself distraught and feeling “helpless and alone.”

He had just been diagnosed with kidney cancer. At age 36, with a wife and two small daughters, he was told he had a large tumor on his left kidney and that the entire kidney would have to be removed.

And then he met Inderbir S. Gill, professor and chair of the Catherine and Joseph Aresty Department of Urology and founding executive director of the USC Institute of Urology.

“I was still scared, but I was suddenly more confident and not helpless and not alone,” Small told a crowd of about 250 at the *Changing Lives Creating Cures* fundraiser held on the DreamWorks lot at Universal Studios Oct. 6.

The event raised over \$1 million in support of urologic cancer and robotics research at the USC Institute of Urology.

“My team and I are confident and committed that we can rapidly translate



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At the Oct. 6 fundraiser on the DreamWorks lot at Universal Studios are, from left: actor Beau Bridges; Amy Lee, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at the Keck School of Medicine; Inderbir S. Gill, professor and chair of the Department of Urology at the Keck School; and actor William Hurt.

tonight’s generosity into tomorrow’s cures,” said Gill, “to give our patients the priceless gift of time and hope.”

USC President C. L. Max Nikias also addressed the audience. “The Keck Medical Center of USC is built on

innovation, and one of the cornerstones of innovation in our medical enterprise is the USC Institute of Urology,” he said. “This vital institute has quickly emerged as a leader in diagnosing and treating all urological disorders. And I’m equally proud that it has

become a groundbreaking pioneer of procedures once thought impossible. From developing a bloodless approach to removing kidney cancer to outpatient prostate removal, it is a place where the extraordinary has become

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‘I was still scared, but I was suddenly more confident and not helpless and not alone.’

—Jeff Small, cancer survivor and president and chief operating officer of DreamWorks Studios

Division of Biokinesiology announces \$5 million initiative

By Cathy Curtis

The USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy officially launched its \$5 million campaign initiative on Oct. 18, the largest undertaken for a physical therapy program in the United States. The six-year initiative aims to strengthen the division’s continued leadership in education, research and clinical practice.

A celebratory picnic attended by faculty, staff, students and the division’s Board of Councilors marked the beginning of the campaign initiative, which is part of The Campaign for the University of Southern California, a multi-year effort to secure \$6 billion or more in private philanthropy to advance USC’s academic priorities and expand the university’s positive impact on the community and world.

“It is the division’s goal—our mission—to transform lives,” said James Gordon, associate dean and chair of the division. “We transform lives through research that will find better ways to treat diseases

that strike across the lifespan, through our clinical practice, and through education of tomorrow’s professionals and researchers.

“To accomplish our goal, we need great faculty, excellent facilities and outstanding students. And to get all of those, we need to raise funds,” Gordon added. “Today, we are proud to kick off this campaign and to enlist everyone in the division—faculty, staff and students—in this effort.”

Under the banner “We Transform Lives,” the fundraising drive will enable the division to support more students with scholarships; recruit and retain distinguished teaching and research faculty; equip facilities with the latest technology; and sustain the research on disease, injury and aging that drives breakthroughs in scientific understanding and treatment.

Gordon also announced the establishment of the Kathleen Bice Clinical Excellence Scholarship and reported

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USC fetes Pulifito for Champalimaud Vision Award

By Hope Hamashige

USC President C. L. Max Nikias recently hosted a reception on the Health Sciences campus to congratulate Carmen A. Puliafito, dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, for being named the recipient of the 2012 Antonio Champalimaud Vision Award.

“We take pride in the work he accomplished during his career that will help millions of people,” said Nikias, at the event, which was held on Oct. 30 in the Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute.

Puliafito was given the award for his work on the team that invented optical coherence tomography (OCT), an imaging technology that has revolutionized the practice of ophthalmology by dramatically improving the ability of clinicians to diagnose and treat such blinding diseases as macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma.

Nikias went on to praise Puliafito for his ability not only as a researcher, but also as a clinician and administrator. “The hardest thing



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USC President C. L. Max Nikias congratulates Carmen A. Puliafito, dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, for being named the recipient of the 2012 Antonio Champalimaud Vision Award.

to do in academia is to be both an administrator and a researcher, and few people can succeed at high levels in both,” he added.

Puliafito received the award in September in Lisbon, Portugal, during a ceremony held at the Champalimaud Foundation, one of the world’s largest international scientific institutions.

He shared half of the

award’s 1 million euro (\$1.26 million) prize with research team members James G. Fujimoto, professor, Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; David Huang, Weeks Professor of Ophthalmic Research, Oregon Health & Science University (formerly

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New Endoscopy Center boasts state-of-the-art diagnosis, treatment

‘It is going to save a lot of people the time and inconvenience of having to have an invasive, expensive, and very often ‘negative’ procedure.’

—Jacques Van Dam, professor of medicine at the Keck School of Medicine

By Hope Hamashige

In designing USC’s new Advanced Endoscopy Center, Jacques Van Dam had two distinct missions in mind. The facility, located in the Norris Cancer Hospital, had to provide excellent patient care and serve as a site for conducting important research. Physicians working in the newly opened suite say it does just that.

There is one small black machine tucked in and among dozens of other pieces of equipment that, while it does not look out of the ordinary, just might revolutionize the screening process for colon cancer. Keck Medical Center of USC is one of four research centers in the world that is using this device, a modified spectrophotometer, to determine whether a person needs to undergo a colonoscopy or not. “Right now, most people are referred for colonoscopy simply because they reach the age of 50,” explained Van Dam, professor of medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

The instrument is being tested for its efficacy, by evaluating the lining of the rectum, whether a person has polyps in the colon. Van Dam



Jon Nalick

Jacques Van Dam, professor of medicine at the Keck School of Medicine, demonstrates an advanced endoscope that outfits the state-of-the-art Advanced Endoscopy Center.

said that if this research is successful, primary care doctors will be able to tell as many as two-thirds of their patients that they do not have polyps and therefore will not need a colonoscopy. “It is going to save a lot of people the time and inconvenience of having to have an invasive, expensive, and very often ‘negative’ procedure,” said Van Dam.

This is not the only major development in the new endoscopy suite at USC Norris Cancer Hospital in recent weeks. According to Van Dam, it has acquired several new pieces of equipment that will provide excellent service to

patients with several types of cancers and will help hospital physicians find and treat tumors more effectively and less invasively. One new device in place now is called The Third Eye Retroscope, a second camera that affixes to an endoscope but gives the reverse view during a colonoscopy. Because it provides the reverse angle perspective, physicians can see in both directions and have the possibility of discovering polyps that might otherwise be hidden from the more standard view. Van Dam explained that USC Norris is the only facility in Southern

California with Third Eye capability.

USC Keck is also one of the few centers in the region that has both endoscopic ultrasound and digital x-ray capabilities. Endoscopic ultrasound allows physicians to detect abnormalities in several abdominal organs, including the pancreas, liver and bile duct and can even help differentiate between tumors, cysts and stones. It is also used to perform biopsies on abnormalities in the chest, abdomen and pelvis. This advanced endoscopic technology is also used to insert the gold seeds that direct image-guided radiation therapy (also known as CyberKnife) for treating malignant tumors of the pancreas.

Up next, the team is awaiting the arrival of its newest tool, a Holmium laser, another instrument that has multiple therapeutic functions. Among them, the laser is used during endoscopy to disintegrate gallbladder stones that have become trapped in the bile duct.

“With these technological advances, we are becoming the premier site in Southern California for interventional endoscopy,” said Van Dam.

USC School of Pharmacy’s Kathleen Hill-Besinque elected president of California Pharmacists Assn.

Members of the California Pharmacists Association, the largest state association in the nation representing pharmacists, have chosen Kathleen Hill-Besinque, associate professor of clinical pharmacy at the USC School of Pharmacy, as the president-elect of the Executive Committee for the 2013 term.

According to the organization, “CPhA’s membership covers the entire

spectrum of pharmacy practice settings and includes student pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. The association’s vision is echoed by all CPhA members: A unified pharmacy profession, recognized as preeminent in patient care.”

Hill-Besinque has demonstrated a dedication to this goal through her work in community-based women’s health, with a particular emphasis on emergency

contraception and menopause therapies. She also has served on the boards for several other professional organizations, including California Society of Health-system Pharmacists, Southern California Society of Health-system Pharmacists and Association of Reproductive Health Professionals.

Hill-Besinque serves as assistant dean for curriculum and assessment at the USC

School of Pharmacy. She is an expert in women’s health, with a special interest in emergency contraception, on which she frequently comments in the media.

“We are in a time of unprecedented change in our health care system,” said

Hill-Besinque. “CPhA is in a leadership and advocacy position to ensure that pharmacists and pharmacy services are enhanced as result of these changes.”

Hill-Besinque will be installed at CPhA’s Annual Meeting, West Coast

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that the division’s Board of Councilors has pledged 100 percent participation in the campaign.

Other speakers at the event included Avishai Sadan, dean of the Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC; Gustavo Alonso, a student in the division’s Doctor of Physical Therapy program; and Angela Parris, a patient of the USC Physical Therapy Associates.

Alonso recalled spending a summer as a college student at a rehabilitation center for special needs children in Mexico.

At that time he was majoring in accounting and computer science. A few years later, however, after having physical therapy for a knee injury, Alonso realized that the hands-on profession he really wanted to enter was physical therapy.

“USC offers us the

opportunity to be challenged by premier educators and to work with leading researchers in our field,” he said. “And USC challenges its students to think about social responsibility and community engagement by helping underserved communities.”

Parris is a physical therapist who suffers from Guillain-Barré syndrome, a disorder that affects the peripheral nervous system with ascending paralysis being the most typical symptom.

With her leg muscles weakened by the disorder, Parris received treatment for severe arthritis by Yogi Matharu, assistant professor of clinical physical therapy in the division.

“Had I not come to USC,” Parris said, “I would not be able to stand here today.”

To view campaign kickoff photos, visit tinyurl.com/Division-Campaign-Kickoff.

The Weekly

Next Issue: Nov. 16

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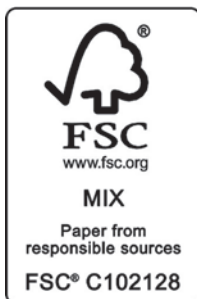
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Massry Prize recipients lecture on key aspects of biological clocks

By Hope Hamashige
Research on circadian rhythms was, according to Jeffrey Hall, professor emeritus of biology at Brandeis University, a “small and esoteric corner of biology” 30 years ago when he and his colleagues embarked on their work to uncover the molecular mechanics behind circadian rhythms.
Hall is one of the winners of the 2012 Meira and Shaul G. Massry Prize who spoke at Mayer Auditorium about the research they all conducted. Hall, along with Michael Rosbash of Brandeis University and Michael Young of Rockefeller University, conducted pioneering research on circadian rhythms.
All three spoke at the Keck School of Medicine of USC on

Oct. 29 about that small and esoteric corner of biological research that has yielded an understanding of circadian cycles that turned out to have broad implications for medical research.
Rosbash pointed out that their work illuminated the fact that at least three human sleep syndrome families were due to mutations in the genes that are involved with the mechanics of the circadian clock.
He added that it was expected that their discoveries about the biological clock would have import for understanding sleep disorders. What they did not anticipate was uncovering that the same mechanisms also control rhythmic activities of organs including the brain, liver, lungs and skin.

In addition to the sleep disorders, he explained, circadian clocks are also related to the occurrence of disease, to the efficacy of drugs and to seasonal affective disorder. Just how they are involved in metabolic syndrome, immune functions and cancer are emerging areas of study.
Hall, Rosbash and Young were awarded the Massry Prize for their multiple discoveries that began in 1984, when Hall and Rosbash, working together at Brandeis, cloned a particular gene, called a periodic gene, that was the first of several genes involved in controlling the body’s circadian rhythms. Young made the same discovery simultaneously while working at Rockefeller.



From left: Michael Young of Rockefeller University; Michael Rosbash and Jeffrey Hall, of Brandeis University; M. Elizabeth Fini, professor of cell and neurobiology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC; and Shaul G. Massry, professor emeritus of medicine at the Keck School.

Over the course of the next several years, they discovered additional genes involved in the body’s circadian clock and were able to characterize how the interplay of the proteins they encode determine

circadian cycles.
Though their initial work was conducted on fruit flies, it was later discovered that the mechanism behind circadian rhythms is universal in the biological world.

Dept. of Defense grant aids effort to battle eye disease with targeted medication delivery

By Kukla Vera
The Department of Defense has granted Andrew MacKay, assistant professor of pharmacology and pharmaceutical sciences at the USC School of Pharmacy, a Vision Research Program Hypothesis Development

Award. When a service member sustains an eye injury during combat, it is rare that they have immediate access to eye drops, medical assistance and the best medical facilities.
These limitations require the development of new technologies and therapies

to address the ocular issues of service members, which is the goal of the Department of Defense’s Vision Research Program. To reach this goal, the VRP has established the Hypothesis Development Award, which “supports the exploration of highly innovative,

untested, high-risk/high-gain concepts, theories, paradigms, and/or methods that address an important problem in traumatic vision injuries.”
With a background in biomedical engineering and an expertise in developing new methods of targeted delivery of medications, Andrew MacKay is uniquely suited to meet these criteria. MacKay has received a two-year, \$250,000 Hypothesis Development Award for his project, “Treatment of the Cornea using Transcytotic Delivery into the Tear Film.” Vice Dean Sarah Hamm-Alvarez, the Gavin S. Herbert Professor in Pharmaceutical Sciences, is a co-investigator on the project.

provide sustained release of therapeutics to initiate wound healing, sustain tissue lubrication in an arid environment, and prevent further damage to delicate ocular surface tissue during transport to medical facilities.”
MacKay will investigate the feasibility of novel ligand-targeted elastin-like polypeptide nanoparticle-based drug delivery to the eye’s lacrimal gland and anterior segment. This drug delivery has the potential to treat not only eye injuries sustained during combat, but also a variety of eye diseases that affect the general population as well.

“This platform technology and specific approach are applicable to other chronic and acute diseases of the eye that do not respond effectively to topical eye drop administration, due to the need for frequent administration and poor patient compliance,” said MacKay.

DREAMWORKS: Funds to benefit USC research

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ordinary.”
Nikias said the innovations have brought the institute national acclaim as well as a dramatic increase in patient volume.
“We are truly grateful to have so many partners join us in our mission to support innovation in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of urologic cancer,” said Keck School of Medicine of USC Dean Carmen A. Puliafito. “Your support helps us to serve our patients, allowing them to live longer and more robust lives. Make no mistake we are working towards a cure.”
Singer, dancer and actor Matthew Morrison, who plays a leading role in the television series “Glee,” provided the evening’s entertainment. Also in attendance were actors Beau Bridges,

William Hurt and Octavia Spencer, as well as U.S. Rep. Judy Chu, California State Controller John Chiang and California State Assemblymember Michael Eng.
As he told his personal story, Small mentioned his age at diagnosis, noting that the average age of someone who has been diagnosed with kidney cancer is 64, not 36. Small is a nonsmoker, living a healthy lifestyle with no history of cancer in his family. “Apparently, cancer does not discriminate,” he said.
“Two and a half weeks after I found myself in despair, I went into surgery. Five hours later I was out and so was my tumor. Eighty percent of my left kidney remained. Recovery was to come, but I would eventually receive the news I’d been waiting for: 36 years old, 1.8 kidneys, cancer-free and not helpless.”

The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A Nov. 5 column in the **National Catholic Reporter** featured a review of **America Undecided: Why Obama Deserves a Second Term**, a recently published book co-authored by **J. Patrick Whelan**, clinical assistant professor of pediatrics at the Keck School of Medicine.
A Nov. 5 article in **The Oncology Report** quoted **Eric Chang**, professor and chairman of radiation oncology at the Keck School of Medicine, who moderated a talk at the annual meeting of the American Society for Radiation Oncology about new research indicating that stereotactic body radiation boosts lung cancer survival.
A Nov. 2 article in **The Orange County Register** featured Rivals United for

a Kure, a fundraising group made up of USC and UCLA alumni who seek to raise \$2 million for cancer research treatments that lack corporate backing. One of the group’s founders, USC alumnus and football announcer **Paul McDonald** said that roughly \$250,000 has been raised so far.
A Nov. 1 report in **Science Codex** highlighted 16 new techniques to minimize neurosurgical risk featured in the November issue of **Neurosurgical Focus**, which was co-edited by **Gabriel Zada**, assistant professor of neurological surgery at the Keck School of Medicine. The news was also covered by MedicalXpress.
An Oct. 30 report in the **Los Angeles Times** featured a \$25 million gift by

Leonard D. Schaeffer, Judge Robert Maclay Widney Chair and Professor at USC, to benefit the USC Leonard D. Schaeffer Center for Health Policy and Economics, run jointly by the USC Price School and the USC School of Pharmacy.
Three years ago, Schaeffer and his wife, Pamela, gave \$1.2 million to found the center. The new gift will aid “collaborative scholarship to address the most complex questions facing health care today,” said USC President **C. L. Max Nikias**. Associated Press noted that the gift is part of USC’s \$6 billion fundraising campaign. **Los Angeles Business Journal** reported that the gift will help the USC Schaeffer Center research ways to reduce the rising cost of health care while improving patient care.
“I support this center because

its rigorous independent and interdisciplinary research provides the foundation for designing effective policies to address these issues in both the public and private sectors,” Schaeffer said.
An Oct. 30 story by KPCC-FM highlighted research by **Pia Pannaraj**, assistant professor of clinical pediatrics at the Keck School of Medicine, finding that school-based vaccination programs result in fewer sick children and higher attendance rates.
An Oct. 30 story in **EmaxHealth** ran an interview with **Steven Mittelman**, assistant professor of pediatrics at the Keck School of Medicine and at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, about obesity being linked to leukemia risk.

Calendar of Events

This Calendar of Events is also online at www.usc.edu/hscalendar for the Health Sciences campus community

Saturday, Nov 10.

November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month. Lung cancer kills more Americans than breast, prostate and colorectal cancers combined. Stop by the Keck Medical Center of USC booth before the football game on Nov. 10 to receive giveaways and information about lung cancer screening and treatment. Also, be sure to check out and try the da Vinci surgery robot that USC surgeons use to remove lung cancers from patients. We will be located at the L.A. Memorial Coliseum entrance near the Olympic torch. For more information on the USC lung cancer program, visit lung.usc.edu. To make an appointment with a lung cancer expert, call (800) USC-CARE.

Monday, Nov. 12

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. “Brain, Hormone and Appetitive Responses to High-Reward Foods: Implications for Obesity,” Kathleen Page, USC. NRT Aresty Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-7732

Thursday, Nov. 15

Noon. Research Center for Liver Diseases Seminar. “Physiological Functions of Mitochondrial Dynamics,” David Chan, Cal Tech. HMR 100. Info: (323) 442-1283

Noon – 2 p.m. Center for Excellence in Research Workshop. “Developing NIH Grant Applications,” Steve Moldin, USC. UPC: CUB 329. Info: (213) 740-6709

Noon. Women in Management Luncheon and Speaker Series. “Pursuing a Global Leadership Career – Challenges and Opportunities for Women,” Heather Wipfli, USC. BCC 1st Floor Conference Room. \$15 members, \$18 non-members. Info: (323) 442-2656

Friday, Nov. 16

6:30 a.m. Anesthesiology Grand Rounds. “Why Does Harvard’s Insurance Company Give a Substantial Insurance Premium Discount to Anesthesiologists for Playing with Dolls?” Daniel Raemer, Harvard. MCH 256. Info: (323) 409-6856

8:30 a.m. Center for Lung Biology Research Seminar. “FDG-PET and the Warburg Effect: Capitalizing on Tumor Metabolism for Improved Patient Care,” Viswam Nair, Stanford. IRD 732-734. Info: (323) 226-7923

8:30 a.m. Surgical Grand Rounds: The 14th Annual Leonard and Marie Louise Rosoff Lecture. “Building an Academic Career ... the Road Less Traveled,” Rosemary F. Kelly, Minneapolis VA Medical Center. DOH 100. Info: (323) 442-9064

Wednesday, Nov. 21

8:30 a.m. “Pulmonary Embolism,” Renli Qiao, USC. IRD 732-734. Info: (323) 226-7923

Monday, Nov. 26

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. “New Developments in HPV – Host Interactions: Consequences for Treatment,” W. Martin Kast, USC. NRT Aresty Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-7732

Wednesday, Nov. 28

2 p.m. – 5 p.m. Global Health Lecture Series. “The State of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Today: Research, Policies and Programs from Around the World,” Various speakers. UPC: TCC 450. Info: (323) 865-0419

Thursday, Nov. 29

Noon. Research Center for Liver Diseases Seminar. “Shp2 and Molecular Signaling in Stem Cells, Metabolism and Liver Cancer,” Gen-Sheng Feng, UC San Diego. HMR 100. Info: (323) 442-1283

Notice: Deadline for calendar submission is 4 p.m. Monday to be considered for that week’s issue—although three weeks’ advance notice of events is recommended. Please note that timely submission does not guarantee an item will be printed. Send calendar items to *The Weekly*, KAM 400 or fax to (323) 442-2832, or email to eblaauw@usc.edu. Entries must include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location and a phone number for information.



Seated center, Pulin Sheth, assistant professor of radiology and director of breast imaging, Lee Breast Center. Behind, from left: Gina Howard, Breast Center imaging supervisor; Linda Hovanessian-Larsen, associate professor of radiology; Stephy Kantardjieff; Susan Whelan; Matt Whelan, Lon V. Smith board member; Mary Yamashita, assistant professor of clinical radiology; Stephen Sener, professor of surgery; Steve Kantardjieff, president, Lon V. Smith Foundation.

USC Norris announces new 3-D mammography

By Valerie Zapanta

Mammography at USC Norris Cancer Hospital received a key upgrade through a generous donation made by the Lon V. Smith Foundation. The Harold and Henrietta C. Lee Breast Center now offers a 3-D mammography screening tool called breast tomosynthesis.

“Building upon our existing digital technology and drawing upon our vast wealth of experience and knowledge with mammography, tomosynthesis, for the first time, allows us to ‘image through the breast.’ This gives us the ability to find small, early and hard-to-detect cancers in both

dense and fatty breast tissues when they are potentially most treatable,” said Pulin Sheth, assistant professor of radiology and director of breast imaging at the Breast Center.

Simultaneously, and just as important, physicians can reduce the number of false positive mammograms and the number of women who need follow-ups or biopsies due to overlapping tissue. “The Lon V. Smith Foundation has provided us with a tremendous amount of support and encouragement in helping us fight breast cancer on an entirely new level and we are very thankful for that,” said Sheth.

According to Sheth, 3-D mammography is the most highly anticipated new technology to enter the breast-imaging arena in over a decade.

“It is an honor to be involved in this advancement for the Breast Center and in helping detect breast cancer in women. Thank you to the Norris staff for your passion in what you do. You are fulfilling the wish of the late Lon Smith, and the purpose of the Lon V. Smith Foundation, as he wanted to concentrate his focus on helping people, and you all are healing people and helping people,” said Steve Kantardjieff, Lon V. Smith Foundation president.

“The Lon V. Smith Foundation and USC Norris have a long historical relationship. We appreciate their most recent gift that will support our doctors and benefit patients,” said Carmy Peters, director of development and community relations at USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.

AWARD: USC honors Puliafito’s work

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of the Doheny Eye Institute at USC); Joel S. Schuman, Eye & Ear Foundation professor and chair, Department of Ophthalmology, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine; and Eric A. Swanson, researcher, Research Laboratory of Electronics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Puliafito made a brief statement in which he said the work on OCT has informed the way he runs the Keck School. According to Puliafito, that type of collaboration, between physicians and engineers, was unusual for its time. He now encourages faculty to pursue multidisciplinary work because he knows first-hand how bringing together various types of expertise can yield exemplary research.

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Visit the USC Web: <http://emergency.usc.edu> This page will be activated in case of an emergency. Backup Web servers on the East Coast will function if the USC servers are incapacitated.