



‘Everyone’s Best Friend’

UVA Cancer Center Gift Honors Tana Taylor

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Gary Taylor grew up in Charlottesville and attended the University of Virginia (Col '85), where he met his best friend, Tana.

The pair married after Gary's second year in school, and over the next 35 years they raised three daughters, participated in a variety of community activities, and built Taylor Associates, a successful wealth management firm associated with Northwestern Mutual. They were a happy and loving family with their whole lives ahead of them.

“So many people referred to Tana as their 'best friend,’” says Gary. “A great mother and an active presence in the community, she loved everyone. That’s just who she was.”

In 2017, Tana was diagnosed with intrahepatic cholangiocarcinoma—a rare and aggressive form of cancer that ultimately took her life at the age of 54. To honor Tana and remember her life, Gary made a gift to UVA Cancer Center, where she received much of her care.

“She loved talking to other patients during her chemotherapy appointments, so it’s fitting that one of the newest infusion suites will bear her name,” says Gary.

The five-bed infusion suite named for Tana is the largest in the newly opened infusion center on the fourth floor of the Emily Couric Clinical Cancer Center building. The addition increases UVA's overall infusion bed capacity by 86 percent, from 30 beds to 56.

“Needs change very quickly at the Cancer Center, so I wanted to make a gift that could be used flexibly and show others that this type of support is essential.” - Gary Taylor

Gary, an emeritus member of the UVA Cancer Center Advisory Board, says his gift serves two purposes.

“Of course, the first is to honor Tana,” says Gary. “But I also learned in our journey that needs change very quickly at the Cancer Center, so I wanted to make a gift that could be used flexibly and show others that this type of support is essential.”

In addition to supporting the new infusion center, a portion of the gift allows Cancer Center Director Dr. Thomas Loughran to respond quickly to new opportunities as they arise.

The gift also comes at a critical point in time for patients living with cancer. While cancer mortality rates are falling nationally, the pace of new cancer diagnoses is outpacing overall population growth, so expanding care is essential. To ensure Virginians will have the care they will need in the coming years and decades, UVA is focused on bolstering specific programs like population health, research, and access to clinical trials.

A National Cancer Institute-designated cancer center since 1986, UVA is currently being considered for a Comprehensive Cancer Center designation—a recognition of excellence in a variety of areas of cancer care and research that is held by only 51 of the nation's cancer centers.

The designation would make UVA the only Comprehensive Cancer Center in Virginia, and one of the few in the nation focused on a rural population.

Dr. Loughran says support like Gary's will help both current and future patients.

“We couldn't be more grateful to the Taylor family, who recognize how valuable cancer centers are to their local communities and to the world,” says Loughran. “Our goal is to take care of patients today, and to make certain that people throughout the Commonwealth have access to world-class cancer care and research five, 10, and 20 years down the road.”

Reflecting on their experience at UVA, Gary recalls the people who cared for Tana and the kindness with which he and his family were treated. “From Dr. Loughran to Dr. Elizabeth Gaughan, who was simply amazing, to Dr. Reid Adams, there were so many people who worked tirelessly to help our family through this journey,” says Gary.

“I'm very glad that my family will play a part in helping UVA Cancer Center write its next chapter.”