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Cancer Center

If you don't have a place reserved in the cemetery, how about your signature on the final steel beam that was raised atop the new three-story building for the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara? As the program stated, "The topping-off ceremony is a long-standing tradition in construction that occurs when the final piece of steel is placed on a building's frame. Its ancient origins are traced back to the Vikings." It is to placate the spirits, who might have been disturbed by the work.

Two hundred of us signed our names. My husband, Don, has lost two wives to cancer so he signed both their names by his own. Then we watched as two construction guys rode the beam up with an American flag flying and an evergreen tree planted in a bucket and put the beam in place. It was stirring to say the least, and according to Dr. Kurt N. Ransohoff, CEO and chief medical officer of Sansum Clinic, and president of the Cancer Foundation of Santa Barbara **Rick Scott**, it announced the public phase of the campaign for our new Cancer Center with a goal of \$38 million – and \$33 million already raised.

Honorary campaign chair was **Leslie Ridley-Tree**, who gave \$10.7 million and will have the new facility named the Ridley-Tree Cancer Center, located one block from Cottage Hospital. As Leslie said, "Years ago, I accompanied my husband, Paul, to his chemotherapy appointments at the original Cancer Center. To imagine that we can honor his memory with the new Ridley-Tree Cancer Center, which represents hope and a new chance at life, is like a dream. I'm just delighted to support this project."



Committee member Julie Nadel and director of medical oncologist Dr. Fred Kass

The rest of Leslie's campaign cabinet members are **Ed and Sue Birch, Dan Gainey, Peter MacDougall, and Maryan Schall**. They like to say, "We are building the Cancer Center of tomorrow, today." Some of those donating \$1 million and above are **Jim and Wendy Drasdo, Hugh and Hunter Foster family, Judy and Jeff Henley, Morrie and Irma Jurkowitz, Bill and Nancy Kimsey, Lillian Lovelace, Dr. Nancy O'Reilly** and daughters **Lauren, Leigh, and Ragan, Maryan Schall, Elaine Stepanek Foundation, Trust and Estate, the Wolf Family Foundation, Sansum Clinic, Cancer Foundation of Santa Barbara, and Cottage Health.**

It always amazes me how the chairs and staff change a construction site into a cocktails and canapés (especially the fresh-cooked shrimp) party with valet parking, tables, chairs, banners, and a platform. There was also a television giving a preview of what the center will look like. They think of everything.

The cancer team cared for 11,779 patients at 69,864 visits in 2015. If you'd like to contribute to the campaign, please contact **Rob Dunton** at (805) 898-3620, **Lori Willis** at (805) 898-2187, or **Dru Hartley** at (805) 681-7726