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For Cygan Clan, Raising Funds Honors Sister and Strengthens Family Ties

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Amy Cygan Spier (shown with her grandson) is survived by ten siblings who are currently planning the third annual Amy's Ride/Run/Walk Against Pancreatic Cancer on May 20, 2017, to raise funds and awareness about the disease.

For Cygan Clan, Raising Funds Honors Sister and Strengthens Family Ties

On May 21, 2016, 250 participants and 70 volunteers came together for the second Amy's Ride/Run/Walk, which raises money for pancreatic cancer research in honor of Amy Cygan Spier. One of 11 siblings, Amy was just 54 years old when she succumbed to pancreatic cancer in November 2014. For the brothers and sisters she left behind, the event is a labor of love.

The idea for a fundraiser began to take shape after the Cygans learned how comparatively little money is devoted to pancreatic cancer research. With a number of cyclists in the family, a bike ride seemed like a logical choice. Given Amy's great love for family, they wanted to include a walk, as well, making the event family friendly. Since then, they've planned and executed two successful events in Quakertown Memorial Park—raising more than \$54,000 for researchers in the Jefferson Department of Surgery.

As one brother, Mike Cygan, explains, half of the siblings are either business owners or project managers, making their skills a natural fit for planning the event. To pull it all off, the siblings

convene for biweekly and then weekly planning calls, and use online tools to collaborate from multiple locations. Mike adds that while the events have been successful in raising money for the cause, the process of supporting Amy—both during and after her battle—has had another benefit: bringing the Cygan siblings closer.

"As the oldest sibling, I have to admit that in the younger side of the family, I didn't know my siblings as adults until now," says Mike. "I've learned a lot about them over the past few years." Amy's sister, Celeste Cygan Vaughn, agrees, and notes that community support has been another blessing: "I've been pleasantly surprised by the generosity of people we know—in terms of time and money. It's amazing."

The Cygans believe that generosity also extends to the Jefferson clinicians, including Harish Lavu, MD, who was Amy's surgeon, and Ashwin R. Sama, MD, who served as her medical oncologist.

"All of us individually got to know some of the staff at Jefferson through Amy's battle," explains another brother, Tony Cygan. "It's just an incredible bunch

of folks and an incredible program. They've supported us with this initiative and been terrific."

The event has been especially meaningful to Mike's next-door neighbor, Nancy Parry, whose husband, Al, was also a pancreatic cancer patient at Jefferson.

"When I arrive at the event and see Al's oncologist and nurse and surgeon, I don't have to go over to them and say, 'Hi, do you remember me?' They come and seek me out and greet me with bear hugs and inquire about how I'm doing," says Nancy. "I'm overwhelmed by that."

Planning for the third event—scheduled for Saturday, May 20, 2017—is already underway. The Cygans encourage everyone to participate. After all, this is a family that's big: in number, in support and in love.

For more information about the Cygans' event, please visit: AmysRideRunWalk.com. To learn more about supporting pancreatic cancer research, please visit advancement.jefferson.edu or contact Lara Goldstein, MBA, in the Office of Institutional Advancement at 215-955-8797 or lara.goldstein@jefferson.edu.



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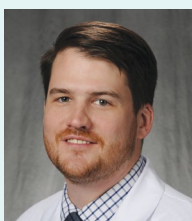
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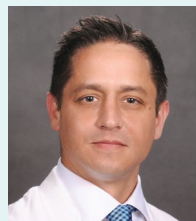
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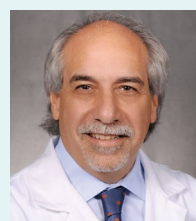
Matthew P. Jenkins, MD, has joined the Division of Plastic Surgery. Dr. Jenkins completed his general surgery residency at Temple University Hospital in 2013 and remained there for fellowship training in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. He is board certified and sees patients at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.



Anirudh Kohli, MD, has joined the Division of Acute Care Surgery. Dr. Kohli completed his general surgery residency at the Montefiore Medical Center at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, followed by a fellowship in Surgical Critical Care at Cooper University Hospital in Camden, NJ. He is board certified and sees patients at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and on the Main Line.



Matthew W. LaPorta, MD, has joined the Division of Acute Care Surgery. Dr. LaPorta completed his internship and four years of surgical residency at INOVA Fairfax Medical Campus in Falls Church (IFMC), Virginia. After residency, Dr. LaPorta remained at IFMC to complete a fellowship surgical critical care. He is board certified and sees patients at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and on the Main Line.



Louis E. Samuels, MD, FACS, has joined the Division of Cardio-thoracic Surgery. Dr. Samuels completed a general surgery residency, followed by a cardiothoracic residency at Hahnemann University. He has had a faculty appointment as a Professor of Surgery at Thomas Jefferson University since 2012. As a member of the full time staff here at Jefferson, he will now have a teaching relationship with our surgical residents and fellows. Dr. Samuels sees patients at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.

Gerald A. Isenberg, MD, FACS, Professor of Surgery, has been named Editor in Chief of *Case Studies in Surgery*, a new journal from the American College of Surgeons. The inaugural issue will be published in winter of 2017.

Congratulations to **Jonathan Brody, PhD**, on his promotion to Professor of Surgery and Pathology, Anatomy and Cell Biology. Dr. Brody is the Vice Chair for Research and Director, Division of Surgical Research.

Congratulations to **Geoffrey Ouma, DO**, on his promotion to Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine and Surgery. Dr. Ouma is a vascular medicine specialist at the Jefferson Vascular Center.

Congratulations to **Francesco Palazzo, MD, FACS**, on his promotion to Associate Professor of Surgery. Dr. Palazzo is Vice Chair of the Department of Surgery and Chief of Surgery at Methodist Hospital.

Congratulations to **Zi-xuan (Zoe) Wang, MD**, on her promotion to Associate Professor of Pathology and Surgery. Dr. Wang is Scientific Director of the Molecular & Genomic Pathology Lab.

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