

SIMPLE QUESTION SPARKS LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

There is a very simple reason why Joan Scheiner is an active part of the development efforts at UM/Sylvester—somebody asked.

That somebody was her oncologist, Pasquale W. Benedetto, M.D. Benedetto helped guide Scheiner through her journey with cancer that began in 1996. In 2001, when it was clear his patient had beaten the grim prognosis of years before, Benedetto suggested she consider putting her fundraising and community development skills to work as a UM/Sylvester volunteer.

Scheiner did more than that. She made a \$50,000 gift to the cancer center to celebrate her 50th birthday, and set the wheels in motion to raise thousands more as a member of the Founders Society.

“When I was a cancer patient, I saw myself as a person who was getting help,” says Scheiner. “When Dr. Benedetto asked, I suddenly saw myself as someone who could be helpful. The kaleidoscope turned for me when he asked that question.”

In addition to having survived metastatic soft tissue sarcoma, Scheiner now is chair of UM/Sylvester’s Development Committee and co-chair of the cancer center’s five-year, \$137 million capital campaign.

Scheiner has been raising money for institutions throughout her adult life. She has raised millions of dollars for a variety of worthwhile causes. Even so, she never imagined herself in that role for UM/Sylvester until somebody posed the question.

“No solicitation begins without somebody asking,” says Scheiner. “Whether it’s you asking yourself if you want to be involved, or someone asking you to become involved, all good deeds begin with a question.” This year, Scheiner asked herself to do more and became a Grand Founder of UM/Sylvester.

Along with achieving the cancer center’s campaign

fundraising goal, and strategizing on programs and events to advance development efforts, Scheiner is working to develop an infrastructure at UM/Sylvester that will ensure the success of future fundraising initiatives.

“UM/Sylvester is a relatively young institution. For me to come into a place and become a builder is an incredible opportunity,” Scheiner says. “Maybe 50 or 100 years from now when I’m gone, I’ll be remembered for having been a part of building this incredible institution.”

Having experienced UM/Sylvester as a patient, Scheiner calls it “a jewel of an institution—a complete healing facility, that through research, changes so much of what patients have to go through.” She knows first-hand that small improvements made possible through research, like changes that dramatically reduce the time it takes

to perform a scanning procedure, are tremendous strides for patients. “We’re all focused on curing cancer, but when you’re a patient, every little step along the way is huge.”

Scheiner says her two children, Michael, 23, and Brett, 26, and her husband, David, are enormously supportive of her work on behalf of UM/Sylvester. “My children think it’s fabulous,” she says. “As a family, community involvement is critical for us.” J. David Scheiner is chair of United Way of Miami-Dade County’s 2005 fundraising campaign and currently is an officer on the board of the Miami Children’s Hospital Foundation.

“Every day, I attempt to use the strength of my spirit to accomplish good things,” Scheiner says. “To be able to do that for UM/Sylvester, the very place that gave me life, is enormously important.”



Joan Scheiner and Pasquale W. Benedetto, M.D.