

# LIFELINE

St. Jude for Life



Summer 2017

## Dear St. Jude Alumni,

In March this year, St. Jude dedicated its main research tower to Dr. Donald Pinkel. Dr. Pinkel was the first medical director and CEO of St. Jude, serving from 1962 to 1973. The Donald P. Pinkel, MD, Research Tower honors a man who, together with Danny Thomas, was

**St. Jude . . .** one of the first to believe that childhood cancer could be cured.



When he came to St. Jude, Dr. Pinkel focused first on acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), the most common type of cancer in children. He and his colleagues believed that there were four major obstacles to curing ALL: drug resistance, drug toxicity, the common danger of leukemia relapse in the central nervous system, and *pessimism!*



No pessimist, Dr. Pinkel started the St. Jude Total Therapy program,

which combined multiple anticancer drugs and treated the central nervous system with radiation and injection of drugs directly into the spinal fluid. St. Jude still uses the Total Therapy approach. Each new study has built on the successes of the preceding one. We're now at Total XVI and we've achieved a 94 percent cure rate for ALL at our institution.



In 1962, Dr. Pinkel went to work in a building that had just one finished room—his office—and childhood cancer was almost always fatal. He would be amazed at how St. Jude has changed over the years. But he might not be completely amazed that today, thanks in part to him and to St. Jude, the overall cure rate for childhood cancer is nearly 90 percent.

## & NOW

To celebrate the incredible progress that has been made, we're sharing some historic photos of the changes that have taken place at St. Jude over the years. We hope you enjoy this issue.

To your health!

Melissa M. Hudson, MD

*Principal Investigator, St. Jude Lifetime Cohort Study*

St. Jude  
**LIFE**  
St. Jude for Life



St. Jude Children's  
Research Hospital  
AISSAC • Danny Thomas, Founder

**History in pictures.** A great many changes have taken place at St. Jude over the past 50 plus years. But one thing never changes—our commitment to find a cure for every child.

## Patients and practitioners—so many years of life



We've grown up and gotten older together—spent lifetimes, and gained lifetimes.



Right, Oncology Department Chair Dr. Ching-Hon Pui with a young patient; above, Dr. Pui and friend in an undated photo—the heart's in the same place!

## Over the years, we've made big advances in knowledge . . .



Radiation therapy led to increased cure rates, especially for leukemia patients. But it is linked to serious side effects. Today, we have learned how to minimize, in some cases eliminate, the use of radiation for most patients.



New imaging techniques help us learn more about children's cancer and treatment side effects. This researcher is viewing fMRI images of the brain to gain insight into mental and emotional problems that can occur after therapy.

## . . . and in the accommodations !



Boomboxes and headphones have been joined by in-room computers and overhead light bars but hospital days can still pass slowly.

## All together at the cafeteria

Since opening day, February 4, 1962, St. Jude has had a common cafeteria, shared by hospital staff, patients, families, and visitors.



Above, the hospital cafeteria in a photo taken on October 23, 1962; left, Kay Kafe today.

**SEE MORE PHOTOS ON OUR WEBSITE:**

<https://www.stjude.org/about-st-jude/history/timeline.html>

## PAT PATCHELL: ONE OF THE FIRST TO BE CURED



Pat Patchell was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia in 1964, at age 11. He was treated at St. Jude on the Total Therapy III study. He remembers seeing Dr. Pinkel at the hospital but wasn't under his direct care.

Pat recalls his stay at St. Jude fondly. "In the nursing wing they had a room with games, a stereo, TV, and a fridge. They tried to make things fun and comfortable for us," he remembers. Pat was one of the first children with ALL to be taken off therapy because his cancer was cured.

"After more than 50 years of being cured, with no side effects," says Pat, "I was diagnosed with bladder cancer after coming back to St. Jude for the LIFE Study. During the evaluation, they saw blood in my urine and told me I should see a urologist. I was actually able to watch the scan on TV that found the tumor," he says. He was treated successfully and is now being treated for a tumor recurrence. "Because of the LIFE Study, St. Jude saved my life twice," says Pat. He plans to continue participating in the study.

Today, Pat works for the Hilton Corporation as an analyst in their treasury department. He lives in Memphis with his wife, Marti, who also works in finance for a Memphis corporation.

## DR. PINKEL

Dr. Donald Pinkel was born in Buffalo, New York, and graduated from medical school at the University of Buffalo. In 1954, while practicing as a pediatrician, he developed polio. The disease weakened his lungs and in Buffalo's cold climate he suffered repeated bouts of pneumonia. He realized he needed to re-locate to a warmer climate.

In 1961, Pinkel met Danny Thomas, who offered him a job as the first medical director of the recently opened St. Jude hospital in Memphis. He was 34

years old when he moved his wife and seven children to Memphis to take the job.

As St. Jude's first medical director, Dr. Pinkel set the tone for the hospital, expecting researchers and clinicians to share information and work together to develop treatments. The Total Therapy he pioneered led the way to today's sky-high cure rates for childhood cancer.

After a lifetime of achievement, Dr. Pinkel recently celebrated his 90th birthday. He teaches part-time at California Polytechnic State University and stays busy with his family in San Luis Obispo, California.



## SAVE THE DATE! 2017 SURVIVORS' DAY IS COMING UP

Survivors' Day will be held on **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9th**, this year. Additional information will be available on the St. Jude website soon. We hope to see you then!



*Please stay in touch with us!*

- Call us toll-free at: **1-800-775-2167**
- Send us an email: **[sjlife@stjude.org](mailto:sjlife@stjude.org)**
- Visit our website: **[www.stjude.org/sjlife](http://www.stjude.org/sjlife)**

**Thank you!**  
**for participating in survivor research**