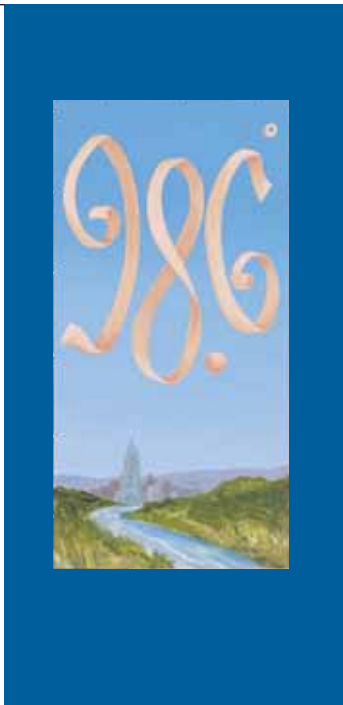


*People and programs
that keep the school
healthy and vibrant*



thought her daughter's stomach didn't look quite right but didn't say anything. Shortly after she returned to Pittsburgh, Browning went for a checkup, and her physician referred her to an oncologist, who discovered a tumor. The party dress went unused as she traveled to an operating room in Pittsburgh instead of a wedding in Paris. Surgeons removed her ovaries, uterus, and sections of tumor that had spread to her abdominal cavity.

Browning was back at the bench one month after surgery. She had chemotherapy

on Thursdays and showed up for work on Fridays. By November of 2003, doctors declared the cancer was in remission, and she moved forward with her work as if she had never slowed down. A couple of months later, Browning came to work as a research associate at the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute (UPCI) in the lab of Theresa Whiteside, Pitt professor of pathology and otolaryngology. With Whiteside, Browning was studying exosomes in ovarian cancer. These cellular microvesicles are released from cancerous cells and enter bodily fluids. Whiteside, a PhD, and Browning wanted to uncover the structure and biologic activity of exosomes to understand how they contribute to cancer.

But Browning's cancer returned in March 2004, just a few months after beginning at Pitt. She was 40 years old.

"She probably didn't feel very well for a bit of time, but she was in the lab and working, reading, and talking about her project," Whiteside says.

In April, Browning's neighbor rushed her to the ER when she had difficulty breathing deeply—her chest was filling up with fluid. Her parents came from Florida to be with her. Browning questioned her doctors about when she could get back to the lab.

A few days before her death on June 1, Browning requested that her assets become a gift to help others investigate ovarian cancer when she could not. Her parents established the Heidi L. Browning Endowed Ovarian Cancer Research Scholars Fund of \$250,000, which will be used to recruit, train, and provide support for talented investigators to focus on ovarian cancer in UPCI labs. ■



COURTESY BROWNING FAMILY

Browning in 2000

CHEMO ON THURSDAYS, WORK ON FRIDAYS

EVEN CANCER CAN'T STOP CANCER RESEARCH

BY KATIE HAMMER

Heidi Browning was both fun and driven. As a girl, she was driven to keep up with her two older brothers. When her aunt presented her with a makeup kit on her 16th birthday, she happily wore its contents as war paint. Later, as a molecular biologist, Browning was driven to contribute to cancer research, even when cancer came for her.

After she earned her PhD at Indiana University in Bloomington, Browning's career took off as though it were powered by rocket fuel. She worked in labs in Zurich, Colorado, and London. She won a postdoctoral fellowship from the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer. With 2001 Nobel Prize laureate Paul Nurse, she published in *Nature Cell Biology* on the mechanisms by which cellular proteins transport cargo to specific locations in the cell. She came to Pittsburgh to continue that work as a postdoc in Carnegie Mellon University's Department of Biological Sciences.

It was about that time, in early 2003, that she seemed to lose her pep. While visiting her parents in Florida, Browning and her mother went shopping for dresses in preparation for a friend's wedding in Paris, but it was difficult to find one that fit properly. Sonia Browning

BOOSTER SHOTS

Arnold Palmer played professional golf for more than a half century after he burst onto the scene by winning the U.S. Amateur Championship in 1954. This quiet, charismatic golfer from Latrobe, Pa., is now positioned to make a big mark in the cancer prevention arena. Palmer, who underwent surgery for prostate cancer in 1997 and whose first wife died in 1999 while being treated for ovarian cancer, has created the Arnold Palmer Endowed Chair in Cancer Prevention at UPCI. A gift of \$2 million from the Arnold Palmer 2003 Charitable Trust enabled the recruitment of **Emanuela Taioli**, the first to hold the chair. Taioli, a Pitt MD/PhD professor of hematology and oncology and director of UPCI's Division of Cancer Prevention and Population Science, studies environmental and genetic causes of cancer in hopes of developing a model for prevention.

Helen Katz was always a big Pitt booster, supporting programs from the arts to the health sciences. The School of Medicine held a special place in her heart because both her brother, **Robert Blockstein** (MD '56), and her late husband, **Louis Katz** (MD '41), were grads. After Helen Katz died last year, the University learned that she had willed \$100,000 to a medical scholarship fund in her husband's name and \$150,000 to support diabetes research at Pitt.

—Chuck Staresinic

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