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UH Cancer Center celebrates 50 years

By George J. Weiner
and Karen E. Knudsen

Each of the nation’s 71 National Cancer Institute-designated cancer centers is required to have an External Advisory Committee (EAC) composed of cancer experts from around the country. The members of the University of Hawaii Cancer Center’s EAC met in Honolulu in early 2022, almost 50 years to the date after the UH Cancer Center was founded, and found that the center has made, and will continue to make, substantial contributions to reduce the burden of cancer in Hawaii, the Pacific Islands, the nation and the world.

The UH Cancer Center is unique among the nation’s cancer centers in a number of ways. The geographic area served by the center is enormous, encompassing Hawaii, Guam and other United States-affiliated Pacific Islands. The ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity of the people living throughout this area is greater than any other cancer center in the country.

Within the state, the UH Cancer Center successfully works with the major health care systems as a member of the Hawaii Cancer Consortium focused on reducing the region’s burden of cancer. This has resulted in productive and unique collaborations among Hawaii’s health care systems.

A major focus of the collaboration between the UH Cancer Center and the health systems in Hawaii is in the conduct of cancer clinical trials. Clinical trials represent the most promis-

ing new ways to find cancer early, treat people with cancer more effectively and provide support for people coping with cancer and for their loved ones.

The UH Cancer Center has worked with the Hawaii Cancer Consortium to collaborate in a manner that provides the people of Hawaii and the Pacific Islands direct access to highly innovative cancer clinical trials in Hawaii, without the need for travel away from home and family. This is also important because it provides confidence that new and exciting cancer treatments are shown to work equally well for the ethnically diverse people of Hawaii and the Pacific.

The UH Cancer Center comprises national leaders in many areas of cancer research. A key example is the center’s Multi-Ethnic Cohort Study. This collaborative study involves analyzing information on health and lifestyle from volunteer participants from various ethnic backgrounds over many years. The information derived from this study has been used to make ground-breaking discoveries related to the role of diet, lifestyle and genetics in cancer, directly affecting the populations the UH Cancer Center serves. This includes engaging various communities to develop new approaches to sup-

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George J. Weiner is chairman and Karen E. Knudsen is vice chairwoman of the External Advisory Committee for the University of Hawaii Cancer Center; this was submitted on behalf of the 12-member committee.

port healthier lifestyles that will ultimately reduce the future burden of cancer in Hawaii and the Pacific.

Other researchers at the center are exploring cancer at the molecular and cellular level. Indeed, discoveries made in the research laboratories in Kakaako will serve as the foundation for the next generation of new approaches to preventing, detecting and treating cancer. This fertile environment for research is also producing the next generation of cancer researchers through the many levels of educational and mentorship initiatives.

On this 50th anniversary of the founding of the UH Cancer Center, we, the members of the UH Cancer Center EAC, congratulate the people of Hawaii, your elected officials, UH leadership, members of the Hawaii Cancer Consortium and other community supporters for your visionary support of this superb cancer research center. We also applaud the UH Cancer Center’s past and present scientists, staff and administrators whose vision and dogged determination have enabled the center to fulfill the promise that was envisioned 50 years ago this year.

It is time for the old guard to leave the political arena



Just when it seemed there was nothing left to criticize about the oft-maligned baby-boom generation, along comes David Gergen with a new book, “Hearts Touched with Fire: How Great Leaders Are Made,” and the painful truth: It’s time for boomers — and some political folks who are even older — to let go of the baton.

Gergen, who has served as an adviser to four presidents from both parties, has been making the book-tour rounds with an important message: Age is an issue. “I just turned 80, and I can tell you, you lose your — you lose a step. You’re not as sharp. You are more forgetful. You’re not quite sure where you’re going,” he recently told “PBS Newshour” anchor Judy Woodruff, who is 75 and retiring at the end of the year.

“You can’t — that’s too old to be in the presidency,” Gergen added.

quit. Today, boomers constitute 53% of the House and 68% of the Senate.

And then there’s Nancy Pelosi, 82, and Mitch McConnell, 80, the speaker of the House and minority leader of the Senate, respectively. Both are considered without peer in performing their respective jobs. So why should they retire — and who would be more effective?

Answer: Because they’ve had long turns, it’s the fair thing to do, and no one’s irreplaceable.

Gergen is equally, if gently, unsparing toward Donald Trump, 75, and Joe Biden, 79, both of whom are threatening to run in 2024. Oy. Please not again. If Biden were to win reelection, he’d be 82 at the start of his second term. Already, he’s showing distinct signs of age that are, with all due respect, plainly worsening. Perhaps Biden doesn’t really



Neither Gergen nor Woodruff appeared to be off their respective games during this conversation. Both have had spectacular careers and will continue to work in some capacity. But their decisions to let younger people step up is admirable and appropriate. No one wants to stay too long at the party or force others to cringe in pity when a once-bright star begins to dim.

Thus, I’ve made a pact with a friend, a younger Washington reporter from Texas. Abby Livingston cites what she calls “The Giuliani Rule,” which will guide her in deciding when to tell me it’s time to pack up my keyboard. The rule refers to a news conference the former New York mayor conducted in November 2020 when his dark hair coloring started running down his cheek in rivulets of sweat. Such an ignominious end to a once-heroic career. With Abby’s help, my tasteful blond highlights will leave the stage intact, along with my dignity.

It’s hard to know or admit when you’re “too old,” or, say, too Giuliani. Gergen warns against people trying to hang on to power. But other factors might matter as much if not more. We are what we do. When we cease doing something so essential to our identity, then what are we? Just old? Or, a fate far worse to Washingtonians, irrelevant?

Gergen is surely correct that a younger generation should be allowed the opportunity to lead. Inarguably, it’s their right. But boomers, whom Gergen broadly describes as a “disappointment,” won’t or can’t

intend to run again and is only trying to steady the troops. But another run in 2024 likely would be a painful and possibly sad spectacle. The forced jog up Air Force One’s steps is already nerve-racking to watch.

If he prevailed, Trump would be 78, a year younger than Biden is now. Halfway into his term, however, he’d be 80 and a ripe 82 before he finishes, assuming he does. Perhaps, he, too, is swaggering simply to keep himself in rallies and headlines — and to keep MAGA unified. But who would wish to be governed by an even-stranger elderly Trump through another terrifying four years? (It’s a rhetorical question; please don’t answer.)

The retirements of Pelosi, Biden, McConnell and Trump wouldn’t be enough to break the boomer curse. (Only Trump is actually a member of the post-war baby-boom generation; the other three, being born in the early 1940s, are members of the silent generation.) Nor would their departures soften their broader cohort’s legacy, which Gergen describes as “crisis upon crisis that we haven’t solved, actions we haven’t taken” and a path that’s “unsustainable.” But a group farewell would be welcome to a tired country. The same ol’ same ol’ is no way forward.

Thanks to Gergen, the seed has been planted. The question is whether his contemporaries can embrace their highest purpose — to ensure that the next generation has the skills and tools to lead the country toward a more-perfect union. We’ll all blow kisses.

Kathleen Parker writes for The Washington Post.

THE LAST WORD

I know all of us will make a difference for each and every one of our students.”

Keith Hayashi
Addressing the state Board of Education after being named superintendent of Hawaii’s public schools



CRAIG T. KOJIMA / 2016

The University of Hawaii Cancer Center is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

Domestic violence victims need a home

By Nanci Kreidman

More island families than you would imagine suffer the harm of abuse. It is a community problem that does not discriminate. Neither socioeconomic class, education, profession nor religion protects people from domestic violence. According to the National Network to End Domestic Violence that conducts an annual study, similar to the point-in-time count for homeless population, it found that in Hawaii, hotlines receive an average of more than three calls per hour.

The requests for help vary, the needs differ, the levels of danger range from threats of fatal violence to persistent berating and degrading interaction. Community agencies are overwhelmed with the system challenges, the risks to those they help, the need for continued innovation in programming and nonstop efforts to raise funds to keep programs anchored.

These last couple of years have been particularly onerous — for all of us. Those whose families are experiencing family violence were at a certain precipice. Prohibited from leaving home, unable to seek re-

sources (with an abuser in close proximity), and terrified with the unpredictability of their partner’s behavior. Adults and children lived as prisoners, with double jeopardy: the public health crisis of the coronavirus and the public health crisis of domestic violence.

During the first month of the COVID-19 lockdown, client contacts at the Domestic Violence Action Center jumped 62%. Creation of safety plans for those needing help leapt 70%; referrals for additional domestic violence resources jumped 83%; and requests for legal information skyrocketed by 271% (see the Honolulu Star-Advertiser “Spotlight Hawaii” interview at 808ne.ws/care).

The lockdown may be long over, but many people are still trapped in households where they endure abuse and need help getting to safety.

The City and County of Honolulu has the opportunity, via federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, to provide \$2 million to provide housing options for people leav-

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Nanci Kreidman, M.A., is CEO of the Domestic Violence Action Center.

ing domestic violence and another \$10 million to provide affordable housing for low-income residents, including survivors of domestic violence. This funding was proposed via Bill 15 (2022) CD2, thankfully, by Council Chairman Tommy Waters. It is incumbent on all elected and appointed leaders to see that they can play an incomparable role working with the community to address this complex and potentially lethal crime of domestic violence.

The journey to safety is a long one, with many obstacles to overcome. Making the life-altering transition from victim to survivor can best be done — for some, can only be done — with help.

We respectfully ask that the City Council’s effort is supported, bringing more affordable housing to all residents, especially those in need of safe places to live.

Supportive presence by community agencies on that journey will inspire stability and self-sufficiency. Safe families are at the core of a healthy community.