In the United States, approximately 15,000 women die of ovarian cancer each year. Those diagnosed amount to 21,000 women annually.

The San Fernando Valley Business Journal is proud to partner with The Ovarian Cancer Circle/Inspired by Robin Babbini to heighten awareness of one of the most common causes of cancer-related deaths among women of all ages. We are also grateful to the organizations below who have shown their generous support in helping find the cure for this disease.
A Profile Of Courage & Hope

A mother’s heartbreaking story leads to a beacon of hope

A child’s death is an anguish. “But, how to move forward becomes the unimaginable next challenge,” explained Paulinda Schimmel Babbini, whose daughter, Robin, died from ovarian cancer when she was only 20.

Robin was a beautiful bundle of high school energy and activities. Early in her senior year she struggled with painful symptoms that defied diagnosis until a CT revealed Stage 3 ovarian cancer. Robin endured multiple surgeries and grueling chemo and yet managed to begin her freshman year at UC Santa Barbara; she even pledged Kappa Kappa Gamma. But six months later, her cancer recurred and had metastasized. Robin lost the battle June 29, 2006. “Why me?” Robin quietly wondered. “Maybe this is happening for a reason.”

Initially Paulinda had no answers. She, her son and their family mourned. But grief and loss slowly gave way to a driving need to be of service. Once a very successful businesswoman who had owned and operated a thriving digital imaging business for over 40 years, Paulinda made the inspiring transition into a life of activist, as an advocate for women battling ovarian cancer.

Paulinda founded the nonprofit 501c3 The Ovarian Cancer Circle/Inspired by Robin Babbini to heighten awareness among women of all ages about this insidious stealth cancer. As a shining light on the life of young Robin, The Circle has grown over the past eight years, bolstered by the tireless support of the Board of Directors and team of volunteers, into a vibrant organization, an important resource for news, community outreach and donor support for ovarian cancer medical research.

The group’s website offers updates on research, treatments, regional and national seminars, as well as fundraising events.

The Circle has increased its public profile with ever-widening local TV and radio press coverage. Paulinda’s tireless work has been honored with a “Women in Leadership” Award by West Hollywood; KNX Radio “Hero of the Week;” a “Certificate of Recognition” by the City of Los Angeles; and a KTLA-TV special segment.

Moreover, last year, a ‘first-ever’ accolade was awarded by the City of Los Angeles, initiated by Councilmembers Paul Koretz, Monica Rodriguez and Nury Martinez, which included a City Proclamation honoring the extraordinary work of The Circle and declaring Sept. 19, 2017 as Ovarian Cancer Awareness Day.

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Paulinda Babbini devotes her life to heightening the awareness of ovarian cancer. It’s a path she never could have anticipated but it is now a cherished mission that sustains a loving flame for her daughter, Robin.
SEPTEMBER IS OVARIAN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

On September 25th through the end of the month, thanks to the generous efforts of Los Angeles Councilman Paul Koretz, Los Angeles City Hall will for the very first time be lit in the color teal – the national identity brand of ovarian cancer.

The City Council adopted this resolution in recognition of Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and this symbolic gesture is a significant acknowledgement to raising awareness about the serious and grim statistics associated with this deadly cancer.

On September 4, 2018, The City of West Hollywood’s City Council members adopted and approved a resolution supporting THE BRCA CIRCLE, inspired by Robin Babbini’s efforts to raise awareness about this disease and funding for research.

RECOGNITION OF AN IMPORTANT CAUSE

It all started on September 19, 2017 when Councilmembers Paul Koretz [CD5], Nury Martinez [CD6] and Monica Rodriguez [CD7] made a conscious decision together to raise awareness about Ovarian Cancer. On that day, the Los Angeles City Council recognized the grassroots non-profit organization, The Ovarian Cancer Circle/Inspired by Robin Babbini, as the national color of Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. Emotional stories were shared of the terrible loss of so many family and friends who had succumbed to this deadly cancer.

So moved was Councilmember Koretz by the presentation and by the reaction of so many, that he wanted to do something memorable this year. On Tuesday, September 25, 2018, almost exactly one year to the date after the initial presentation, there is a plan to revitalize that momentum. Councilmember Koretz has cleared the way to fully support and early diagnosis, more effective treatments and ultimately a cure.

Each year The Circle hosts two major fundraising events: “Take a Bit Out of Ovarian Cancer” is November 15, 2018, sponsored by Ruth’s Chris Steak House in Woodland Hills. Guest of honor this year is Dr. Sanaz Memarzadeh, The Circle’s affiliate gynecologic oncologist. For tickets, sponsorship and program ads, see www.theovariancancercircle.org/events. Also, in the spring, “Tad There’s a Cure” is an evening’s dinner, auction plus marquee musical and comedy entertainment. Details will be soon posted on The Circle’s website.

The Circle dedicates all its fundraising to the prestigious UCLA-based G.O. Discovery Lab, led by Dr. Memarzadeh. In 2018, The Circle grossly achieved a major milestone, reaching a total contribution to the G.O. Discovery Lab of $100,000. Paulinda Babbini devotes her life to heightening the awareness of ovarian cancer. It’s a path she never could have anticipated but it is now a cherished mission that sustains a loving flame for her daughter, Robin. It is in her memory that Paulinda remains passionately motivated until there is a cure for ovarian cancer.

Learn more about The Circle and its fight against Ovarian Cancer by visiting theovariancancercircle.org.
UCLA Health
and the
UCLA Gynecologic Oncology
(G.O. Discovery) Lab team

Honor

Paulinda Schimmel Babbini

and

The Ovarian Cancer Circle

Inspired by Robin Babbini team

for their on-going efforts, commitment and continued
support of Dr. Sanaz Memarzadeh’s ovarian cancer research.

You have the power to make a world of difference
in gynecologic cancers research and treatment options.

Join forces with UCLA to advance human health and improve
outcomes and quality of life for patients and their loved ones.

Please visit: godiscoverylab.com
Cedars-Sinai’s Expert Radiation Oncology Team

Cedars-Sinai has assembled an outstanding radiation oncology team with remarkable accomplishments and experience in the fight against ovarian and other cancers. Below are snapshots of the team members.

**HOWARD SANDLER, MD, MS**
**PROFESSOR AND CHAIR, RADIATION ONCOLOGY**
**RONALD H. BLOOM FAMILY CHAIR IN CANCER THERAPEUTICS**

Dr. Sandler’s clinical and research interests include prostate cancer and other genitourinary tumors, skin cancer and a broad range of subjects related to radiation oncology. He has been involved in many research projects funded by the National Institutes of Health and other agencies. He trained in radiation oncology at the University of Pennsylvania.

**C. MICHELE BURNISON, MD**
**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, RADIATION ONCOLOGY**

Dr. Burnison’s clinical expertise is in cancers of the prostate, breast, thyroid, skin and in leukemias/lymphomas. She is particularly respected for her experience in prostate radiation implants and intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT and seed implants), as well as breast radiation therapy. She trained in radiation oncology at UCLA.

**BEHROOZ HAKIMIAN, MD**
**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, RADIATION ONCOLOGY**

Dr. Hakimian’s clinical expertise is in brain tumors, pediatric cancers, lymphomas, gynecologic cancers and sarcomas. He is experienced with total body irradiation and brachytherapy. Dr. Hakimian is a dedicated teacher, and he directs the medical student experience within the Department of Radiation Oncology. He trained in radiation oncology at University of California, Irvine.

**BENJAMIN L. KING, MD**
**RADIATION ONCOLOGIST**

Dr. King is accomplished in treating a variety of cancers, particularly of the prostate. He previously served as a radiation oncologist at Boston’s Brigham and Women’s Hospital, and as clinical instructor at Harvard Medical School. Dr. King received his medical degree at Harvard University and completed his training in radiation oncology at the University of Washington Medical Center.

**AMIN J. MIRHADI, MD**
**RADIATION ONCOLOGIST**

Dr. Mirhadi’s primary clinical and research interests include breast cancer, lung cancer, brain tumors, and spine and lung radiosurgery (image-guided). He trained in radiation oncology at UCLA.

**ROBERT S. REZNK, MD**
**RADIATION ONCOLOGY INSTRUCTOR**

Dr. Reznik’s primary clinical expertise includes cancers of the brain, prostate, breast, liver and pancreas, and he is accomplished in advanced treatment techniques—including the latest in external beam radiotherapy, stereotactic radiosurgery and image-guided radiotherapy. He completed his training in radiation oncology at Cedars-Sinai, and he also speaks Spanish and Russian.

**STEPHEN SHIAO, MD, PHD**
**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, RADIATION ONCOLOGY AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**

Dr. Shiao’s clinical and research interests are in breast, melanoma and brain tumors. He has an extensive background in advanced radiotherapy techniques, such as image-guided and stereotactic radiosurgery. Dr. Shiao’s PhD is in immunology, and he’s studying the interaction of radiotherapy and the immune system. He trained in radiation oncology at University of California, San Francisco.

**RICHARD TULI, MD, PHD**
**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, RADIATION ONCOLOGY AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**

Dr. Tuli’s primary clinical and research interests are in gastrointestinal oncology. He has a strong interest in the multidisciplinary management of gastrointestinal cancer patients. His clinical research interests include investigating novel radiotherapy techniques, such as image-guidance and stereotactic ablation, to improve clinical outcomes and minimize toxicity. He trained in radiation oncology at Johns Hopkins.

**ZACHARY ZUMSTEG, MD**
**RADIATION ONCOLOGIST**
**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, RADIATION ONCOLOGY**

Dr. Zumsteg specializes in the treatment of head and neck, and gastrointestinal cancers. He completed his training in radiation oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. In addition to his clinical practice, he is actively engaged in clinical research and is the author of numerous peer-reviewed publications, with articles appearing in journals such as Lancet Oncology, Journal of Clinical Oncology, JAMA Oncology, European Urology, Clinical Cancer Research and Cancer.
I’ll help you understand your cancer, so we can choose the best way to fight it.

At Cedars-Sinai, we treat cancer with science. We treat cancer with research. But we also treat cancer with people.
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earchers and clinicians at UCLA Health and the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA are working better understand gynecologic cancers and provide excellent care to patients living with these diseases.

Physician-scientist Sanaz Memarzadeh, MD, PhD in collaboration with her colleagues at UCLA is helping to propel this mission forward. As a clinician, Dr. Memarzadeh has over 13 years of active practice as a board certified gynecologic oncologist. She is also an accomplished surgeon and is skilled in optimal cytoreduction, robotic surgery, and minimally invasive operations. Compassionate and adept, she specializes in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of all gynecologic malignancies and invasive diseases, including ovarian, endometrial, and cervical cancer.

Dr. Memarzadeh is not only passionate about caring for women with gynecologic cancers, she also recognized a vital need for basic science research in this area. During her fellowship, she was struck by how therapies for gynecologic diseases had not made the same advancements in the last several years. To address this urgent need and after a successful fellowship, Dr. Memarzadeh completed a Ph.D. in the department of Molecular Biology at UCLA. Today, in addition to being a skilled surgeon, maintaining her practice, and caring for her patients, she is performing scientific research at UCLA, focusing on the molecular pathways of gynecologic cancers in the hopes of better understanding these diseases and developing new, more effective therapies to help patients.

As director of the G.O. (Gynecologic Oncology) Discovery Lab affiliated with the UCLA Eli and Edythe Broad Center of Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research and the UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, Dr. Memarzadeh and her team seek to overcome the clinical problem of therapy resistance in two poorly understood and understudied compared with other cancers.

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OVARIAN CANCER AWARENESS

UCLA’s Efforts in the Battle Against Ovarian Cancer

Led by trailblazing physician-scientist Dr. Sanaz Memarzadeh, UCLA brings the fight to ovarian cancer

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Share These Five Facts About Ovarian Cancer

A

etter way of diagnosing and treating “Ovarian cancer is on the horizon. Dr. Sanaz Memarzadeh, a UCLA professor in obstetrics and gynecology and member of the UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, is convinced of it. She and her colleagues are focusing on discovering why epithelial ovarian cancer, one of the most common and aggressive subtypes of the disease, often recurs despite standard treatment. Through a collaborative effort at UCLA, researchers are trying to restore the function of a key protein — known as p53 — that is commonly mutated in ovarian cancer. Dr. Memarzadeh and her collaborators are testing whether this approach, coupled with standard therapies, can prevent recurrence of ovarian cancer.

“My lab and I have really dedicated our focus and efforts to studying this disease,” said Dr. Memarzadeh, who is also a member of the Eli and Edythe Broad Center of Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at UCLA. “By studying the biology of some of the most aggressive subtypes, we’re hoping to one day soon make a real difference in how we approach and treat ovarian cancer.”

Such commitment is vital. Although ovarian cancer is often considered a relatively rare cancer — accounting for only about 1 percent of all cancers in women — it causes more deaths than any other female of the ovarian cancer’s female reproductive system. It’s also the fifth-leading cause of cancer death in the United States. In September, also known as Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, follow these five facts with your friends and family.

OVARIAN CANCER CAN’T BE EASILY DETECTED

Ovarian tumors are responsible for a disproportionately large number of gynecologic cancer-related deaths, because many women don’t detect the disease at an early stage, when it’s most easily treatable.

WARNING SIGNS ARE OFTEN MISINTERPRETED FOR MORE COMMON ILLNESSES

The symptoms of ovarian cancer (such as feeling bloated or full, having stomach pain or trouble eating, and needing to urinate often) resemble other common ailments, which further impedes early detection.

TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR OVARIAN CANCER ARE EVOLVING AND NEED TO IMPROVE

For more than 40 years, ovarian cancer treatment — including surgery, followed by chemotherapy, have remained largely the same. More recently new targeted agents are being incorporated into treatment regimens.

GENETICS CAN PLAY A ROLE

Evaluating ovarian cancer, the most common type, occurs most often in women ages 50 to 65, sometimes running in families. Genetic testing for two genes typically associated with breast and ovarian cancer — BRCA1, BRCA2 and others — is recommended for those with a strong family history of breast or ovarian cancers.

MORE FUNDING IS NEEDED TO FIND BETTER TREATMENTS FOR OVARIAN CANCER

Ovarian cancer is particularly understudied and understudied compared with other cancers. For example, in 2016, the National Cancer Institute invested $95.6 million in ovarian cancer research. That investment was 66 percent less than prostate cancer research (which received $241 million) and 82 percent less than breast cancer research (which received $519.9 million), which kills a proportionally fewer number of people who are diagnosed.

Information for this article was provided by UCLA Health. For more information, visit UCLAHealth.org

SEPTEMBER 17, 2018