

# PROFILE

## Marsha and Jimmy Gibbs Regional Cancer Center

Beauty, Serenity, and Excellent Care

**T**he Gibbs Regional Cancer Center of Spartanburg Regional Medical Center in Spartanburg, S.C., is the dream come true of its physicians, staff, and administration.

The founders, James DeWitt Bearden III, M.D., a medical oncologist who is now medical director of the center, and Julian C. Josey, M.D., a radiation oncologist who heads Gibbs' Department of Radiation Oncology, shared a vision of a cancer center where everything, including the inpatient unit, was in one building designed to be a healing environment. With community support and the help of the administration of the Spartanburg Regional Medical Center, to which the Gibbs center is attached, that vision was realized in 1999.

Since its opening, the cancer program has expanded rapidly. Accredited by the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer, the program offers all the major treatment options for adults, including medical, surgical, radiation, and gynecological oncology services.

Gibbs started a small rehabilitation program two years ago, but a recent three-year, \$440,000 grant from the Duke Endowment will allow Gibbs to open a comprehensive cancer rehabilitation program in a 4,500-square-foot area on the first floor of the cancer center.

### Surrounded by Healing

Providing excellent patient care was a given for all the planners. Still, they found themselves focusing more and more on the environment they wanted to create.

"We wanted a calm, beautiful atmosphere that quieted fears," said



### Selected Patient Support Services

- Multiple support groups are offered, including *Us Too* for prostate cancer patients and their families, *Cancer Caring Connection* for all patients with cancer, and special groups for breast cancer and colorectal cancer.
- That Special Look boutique carries hygiene supplies, aromatherapy products, wigs, turbans, caps, mastectomy products, and bathing suits.
- *The Look Good Feel Better Program* provides image and makeover consultations for patients during treatment.
- Annual skin, prostate, and colorectal screening programs are available.
- A full-time chaplain offers spiritual support.
- The Lung Cancer Education and Early Detection Program (LEEP) is co-sponsored by Gibbs and the American Cancer Society and offers smoking cessation classes for Gibbs patients and the community.

### Vital Statistics

- Total hospital bed size: 588
- Dedicated cancer unit beds: 30
- Number of new analytic cancer cases seen per year: 1,362
- Managed care penetration in South Carolina: 15%

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Josey. The generosity of the community allowed the team to hire renowned landscape architects Innocenti and Webel from New York, who designed a space and surrounding gardens so beautiful they are frequently used for weddings and the senior pictures of the local high school.

Patients enter Gibbs through a four-story atrium surrounded by mezzanines. Piano music is playing, natural light and plants abound throughout the space, and the furniture is upholstered in calming colors. A fountain in the meditation garden outside the center seems to flow inside through a glass wall, past a statue of bathing cranes, and down marble steps to a 20 foot-long pool inside the lobby.

The radiation oncology unit was deliberately placed on the first floor and features another skylight so patients receiving therapy won't feel like they are being treated underground. The department offers a full range of radiation services, including 3-D treatment planning, brachytherapy, and IMRT. Gibbs uses IMPAC digital port imaging to check port films online, and has PET/CT/MRI fusion capability for IMRT treatment planning.

June Clark, Gibbs' executive director, says the 30 private rooms on the inpatient unit look like hotel suites. Each room has a Murphy bed for visiting family members, a built-in TV/VCR, and a desk with a modem. Families have the use of a full kitchen, where volunteers bake cookies twice a week. Inpatients also have their own indoor patio garden overlooking the atrium, equipped with rocking chairs. A hospice area on the inpatient floor completes the center's vision of total care.

In addition to the usual pamphlets, books, videos, and computers, the Cancer Learning Center off the lobby also has its own learning specialist, Perry Patterson, a former educator. Patterson is on duty Monday through Friday. He helps patients and their families get online

to find information on their diagnosis, and has his own interactive web site where he answers questions for both patients and members of the community.

Gibbs commissioned a local photographer to produce an installation called "Our Community at Work, Worship, and Play," and the color and black-and-white photos are hung throughout the cancer center.



Patients often see familiar people and places, which makes them feel at home.

As part of the hospital's Healing Arts Program, community professionals and students from the area's three colleges give performances in the cancer center at least once a month. The main atrium has been the venue for ballet, string trios, harpists, and choirs, which are enjoyed by the entire hospital.

The patients weren't the only ones considered when Gibbs was planned. The nursing stations are open, and nurses do all their documentation on laptop computers they can roll from room to room. All the relaxation, arts, and massage programs are open to staff members as well. "We thought that staff satisfaction was a critical component of our patient satisfaction efforts," Clark said. The result of these efforts is that Gibbs consistently scores in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile on its staff satisfaction surveys.

### Assuring Access to Care and Clinical Trials

In 2001 Gibbs Regional Cancer Center and Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center formed an affiliation to enhance access to cancer care for the citizens of their communities. The Comprehensive Cancer Center of Wake Forest University, located in Winston-Salem, N.C., is one of 41 NCI-designated cancer centers in the nation and has been ranked among the best cancer treatment facilities in the country by *U.S. News and World Report*. Gibbs and Wake Forest collaborate on research, clinical care, education, and administration, and faculty and staff from both institutions act as resources for one another.

The Upstate Carolina CCOP (Community Clinical Oncology Program), located at Gibbs Cancer Center, was started in 1983 and is one of the original 50 CCOPs in the country. SWOG is Gibbs' main research base, followed by RTOG, NSABP, MDAAC, NCCTG, and CCCWFU. Gibbs also participates in major chemoprevention trials, such as STAR and SELECT, and studies run by pharmaceutical companies.

The staff members at Gibbs can't say enough about the community that surrounds their facility. "Spartanburg is a city of 60,000 in an area of 500,000 people, but everyone supports the cancer center. Approximately \$4 million of our start-up money came from the people, led by a generous donation of \$1.2 million from Marsha and Jimmy Gibbs for whom the center is named," said Bearden.

"We have amenities we couldn't possibly have afforded without community support and donations," adds Josey. "The participation of the whole community makes us strong."

The cancer center shows its gratitude by providing the best care possible, doing community outreach and screening for all types of cancer, and making the cancer center a healing resource for the entire Spartanburg area. ☐