Moving Medical Science Forward

Craig and Sue Sincock are passionate — and pragmatic — about medical progress

CRAIG SINCOCK BELIEVES that the success of any enterprise, no matter what it is, depends on the quality of the people who participate. "If you get the right people and give them the right support," he says, "you can accomplish just about anything — including a dramatic paradigm shift."

It's nothing less than a paradigm shift that Sincock, president and CEO of Ann Arbor-based Avfuel Corporation, and his wife, Sue, are helping to catalyze with their gift supporting outstanding junior researchers in the areas of cardiology, cancer, urology and pediatrics. "Helping young scientists early in their careers helps move science and innovation forward," Sincock says.

The Sincocks recognize that young investigators often find themselves in a funding catch-22: their work is unproven and their ideas novel — often a barrier with established funding sources that favor research with demonstrated progress and potential. Without support, young scientists can't pursue the work that would garner the grants to allow them to continue that very work. Innovative, truly original research can fall by the scientific wayside, as can those considering careers in biomedical research. That's what the Sincocks want to change.

"These rising young researchers can thrive in a collaborative environment backed by more than 150 years of the U-M as a teaching hospital," Sincock says. "Sue and I have great faith in the University of Michigan."

Their faith is grounded in part in their own educational experiences with the U-M. Craig Sincock holds a bachelor's in business administration; Sue earned her teaching certification and a bachelor's in education. Since acquiring Avfuel in 1985, Craig Sincock's business philosophy of "the right people and the right support" has built the company into the nation's leading independent supplier of aviation fuels and services. Both Sincocks foster a deep passion for general and business aviation — and its intersections with medicine and many other critical areas of daily and business life.

"General aviation enables the transport of medical equipment, patients, personnel and organs from place to place in an expeditious manner that

Craig and Sue Sincock (foreground), with the Sincock investigators (from left) Suzanne Dawid, M.D., Ph.D., who studies antibiotic-resistant strains of pediatric diseases; Theodore Kolias, M.D., whose work seeks to develop new methods to assess cardiac function using echocardiography; Sami Malek, M.D., (seated), who explores personalized DNA approaches to tailor cancer therapy to the patient; and David Miller, M.D., who researches population-based patterns of care for urological problems.

AUSTIN THOMASON, U-M PHOTO SERVICES

would be impossible by ground, and difficult via scheduled or commercial airlines," Craig Sincock says. "The link between general aviation and medicine is critical to driving medicine forward."

Driving medicine forward is the goal of the Sincocks' support of young U-M investigators. "There are all of these wildly talented and driven investigators who have some truly fascinating ideas that will undoubtedly produce treatments and cures in the near future," Sue Sincock says. "By giving seed money to their ideas, we are challenging them and paving the way for their ideas to get noticed for larger grants."

That's exactly what the Sincocks' gift is doing, according to Suzanne Dawid, M.D., Ph.D. "Support in the first years is critical to the development of a productive laboratory," she says. "The Sincocks' generosity has allowed me to hire additional personnel, which will enable me to move my research forward at a much faster pace."

On both the global and local levels, the Sincocks have been active philanthropists. In addition to their generous support of U-M investigators, the Sincocks have contributed to or volunteered for causes ranging from the Corporate Angel Network — the charity organization of the National Business Aviation Association — to the Ann Arbor Community Fund.

Regarding their investment in the future of medicine through the work of early-career scientists, Craig Sincock says, "The fields we chose to support are fields that touch many, many lives. We would like to see the investigators we support, who we feel are among the best and brightest in the nation, go on to obtain future grants from large institutions in order to continue their critical work." —RICK KRUPINSKI

Agilent Technologies

Generous Support Targets Prostate Cancer

GIFTS OF MORE THAN $500,000 FROM Agilent Technologies Inc., based in Santa Clara, California, will support prostate cancer research in the Michigan Center for Translational Pathology, and will be matched by the Prostate Cancer Foundation as part of the Wolverines Against Prostate Cancer Challenge. Agilent also has provided the center with nearly $800,000 in state-of-the-art laboratory equipment.

Agilent Technologies is the leading supplier of electronic test and measurement products, such as data generators, multimeters and oscilloscopes. Originally the core business started in 1939 by William Hewlett and David Packard, Agilent was formed in 1999 when Hewlett Packard split off its test measurement business.

The Michigan Center for Translational Pathology has done groundbreaking work in search of a cure for and better treatment of prostate cancer — in particular the research of the center's director, Arul Chinnaiyan, M.D., Ph.D., to target therapies based on his research team's discovery that two genes unique to prostate cancer fuse together and can be easily detected. Agilent's gifts will further the work of the center, which also holds important implications for cancer of the breast, lung, colon and skin.

The Prostate Cancer Foundation, the world's leading philanthropic organization for funding prostate cancer research, is matching gifts to the Wolverines Against Prostate Cancer Challenge up to $1 million. —RK

Ruddon Gift Spurs Translational Cancer Research

FROM THE TIME HE DOUBLE-majored in chemistry and biology at the University of Detroit, Ray Ruddon wanted to apply his knowledge to questions in human health. After a long and illustrious career doing so, Ruddon and his wife, Mary Lynne, have made a $250,000 gift to endow research in cancer biology in the U-M Comprehensive Cancer Center through the Raymond W. Ruddon, M.D., Ph.D., Research Fund in Cancer Biology. A like amount from the Ruddons' estate will double the endowment's funds.

Ray and Lynne Ruddon

Ruddon completed his Ph.D. in pharmacology at the U-M in 1964 — with thesis work on the mechanism of action of nitrogen mustard, the first clinically effective anticancer drug — and earned his M.D. from Michigan in 1967. His career included time on the U-M's faculty and as director of the Eppley Cancer Center at the University of Nebraska, as well as overseeing science and technology at Johnson & Johnson Corp. During his years at Michigan, Ruddon served as chair of the Department of Pharmacology and it was in that role that he became one of the founders of the U-M Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Says Max Wicha, M.D., professor of internal medicine, Distinguished Professor of Oncology and director of the Cancer Center, "Dr. Ruddon played a key role in organizing and developing a strong basic science research foundation for the Cancer Center."

Though Ruddon anticipated retiring from Johnson & Johnson, that chapter of his life was delayed by another Michigan summons, when former Medical School Dean Allen Lichter invited him to become the senior associate dean for research and graduate studies. In that role, Ruddon forged research collaborations across the University and initiated innovative programs such as the Michigan Metabolomics and Obesity Center, the Center for Computational Medicine and Biology, and the Translational and Clinical Research Initiative Program.

Ruddon met his wife while both were in graduate school at the University of Michigan; they were married in 1961. Lynne Ruddon is an accomplished watercolorist and has exhibited her paintings across the U.S., including at the Detroit Institute of Art.

Lynne and Ray Ruddon's unwavering commitment to cancer research and improving human health is what led to the creation of the Raymond W. Ruddon, M.D., Ph.D., Research Fund in Cancer Biology — and what Ray Ruddon's professional life has been all about.

"We want our gift to support research that has a clear goal of translating into advances in cancer diagnosis and treatment," Ruddon says, "and to facilitate collaborations across disciplines, including basic and clinical science. It's the way science should be done — and is being done at Michigan." —RK

SCOTT SODERBERG, U-M PHOTO SERVICES

Professorships Recently Inaugurated

Seven Medical School professorships bear the name of the late Frederick Huetwell after the inauguration of the **Frederick G.L. Huetwell Professorship in Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences**. Established in 2008 through funding from the Frederick G.L. Huetwell Ophthalmic Research Endowment, the professorship honors the generous 1938 U-M alumnus. Terry J. Smith, M.D., a professor of ophthalmology and visual sciences, was installed as the first holder of the professorship on September 9.

A gift from the Shirley M. McLaughlin Trust has created three professorships in the Medical School; the most recent — the **H. Marvin Pollard Professorship in Gastrointestinal Sciences** — was inaugurated October 5. Nationally recognized for his contributions to research and treatment of pancreatic cancer, Pollard served as chief of gastroenterology from 1940-72. He assisted McLaughlin and her husband, Robert, in her fight against a brain tumor. Juanita L. Merchant, M.D., Ph.D., a professor of internal medicine and of molecular and integrative physiology, is the first Pollard Professor.

Allen S. Lichter (M.D. 1972), U-M Medical School dean from 1999-2006 and professor emeritus of radiation oncology, was honored October 26 with the inauguration of the **Allen S. Lichter Professorship in Radiation Oncology**. Lichter is widely known for his research into the treatment of breast cancer and spent the majority of his career at the U-M, serving as chair of radiation oncology prior to his appointment as dean. He currently is executive vice president and CEO of the American Society of Clinical Oncology. Benedick A. Fraass, Ph.D., a professor of radiation oncology, is the first Lichter Professor.

A former U-M Medical School faculty member who became the first female chief at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston and the only female chief of neurology at an academic hospital in the nation, is the namesake of the **Anne B. Young Collegiate Professorship in Neurology**. Professor of Neurology Roger L. Albin, M.D. (Residency 1988), is the first holder of the professorship, which was inaugurated October 27 and made possible through a gift from the Leslie Fund Inc. Young, a renowned expert on Huntington's and Parkinson's diseases, currently serves on the faculty of Harvard University. —KB