

Bobbie Nick Voss Charitable Funds battles colon cancer through awareness, research

Friends and family marveled at the positive energy with which Bobbie Voss lived her life, even after her diagnosis of colon cancer in 2000. During her five-and-a-half-year fight with the disease, she displayed incredible strength and courage as she remained committed to the things about which she cared most – her family, loved ones, her faith and her career.

Bobbie Voss worked for Gordie Boucher for 35 years and was a vital member of the Boucher Automotive Group since its inception in 1977. For 28 years, she was chief financial officer of the automotive group, as it expanded to 17 locations.

She died on July 27, 2005, at the age of 52, but she inspired her loved ones to find a way to give hope to others living with cancer. A group of her close friends and family, including her husband, Michael Voss, decided to form a committee and raise money through a golf outing to honor Bobbie's memory. Proceeds from the inaugural outing recently benefited the Medical College.

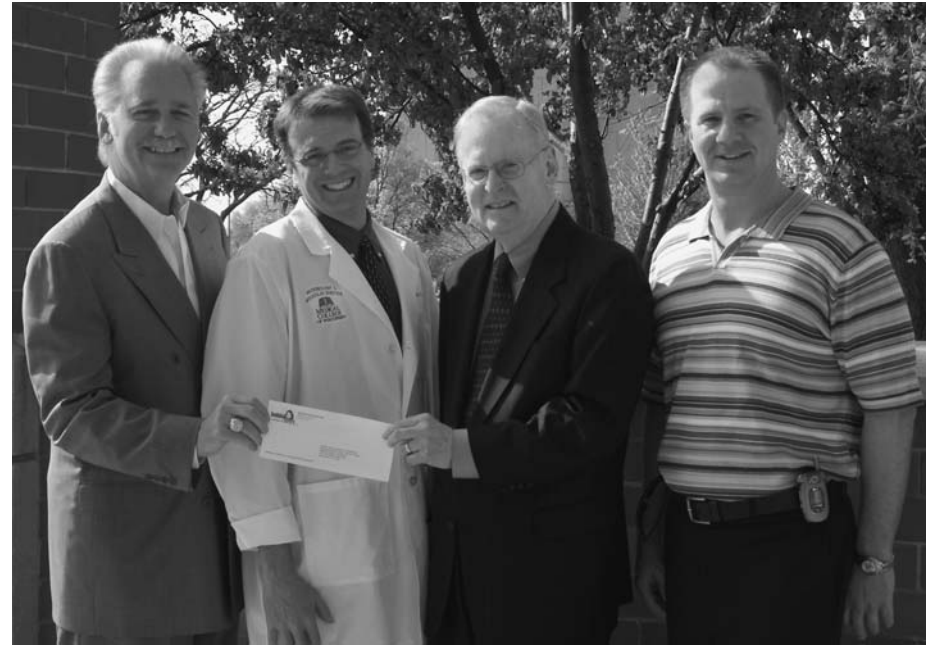
"She was always vibrant and never complained about her cancer," Michael Voss said. "She was just an absolutely super person. That's why people not only wanted to work on the committee but also work on raising funds so we can give money to people like those at the Medical College doing good things in research."

The Medical College laboratory of Michael Dwinell, Associate Professor of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, received \$43,500 in support from the Bobbie Nick Voss Charitable Funds. The Dwinell laboratory is investigating communication between cells in the human gastrointestinal tract. The research focuses on molecules called chemokines, which can initiate healing in the gut when they bind with certain proteins.

Dr. Dwinell's team has discovered that the gene that codes for a chemokine named SDF1 is silenced or "turned-off" in many colon cancer patients. Their further analysis has indicated that silencing of this gene has a critical role in promoting colon cancer metastasis.

"We have initiated studies into ways of restoring this altered communication arc in order to disrupt tumor metastasis," said Dr. Dwinell, a member of the College's Cancer Center. "Interestingly, the same SDF1 gene is turned off in breast cancer tumor cells as well, suggesting our findings have broader significance in the understanding of cancer progression."

Funding from the Bobbie Nick Voss Charitable Funds is supporting the



Michael Voss (left) and Peter Melchior (right) of the Bobbie Nick Voss Charitable Funds present a check to colon cancer researcher Dr. Michael Dwinell and Medical College President and CEO T. Michael Bolger, JD.

studies of a predoctoral fellow completing his doctoral research into the functional changes in tumor cells in which the chemokine signaling pathway has been experimentally restored. The gift will also be used to purchase a spectrophotometer. This sensitive piece of equipment will help scientists in the Dwinell lab define changes in gene expression and gene silencing and more clearly detect early changes in the colon that may be suggestive of future colon cancer.

Having such identifiable application for the funds was one of the things that drew Michael Voss and the others to the Medical College. "Between the presentation of the research and meeting Dr. Dwinell and visiting his lab, it just made us feel good that the money was going to be used for specific things," he said.

"Hearing that the Bobbie Nick Voss Charitable Funds chose to provide funding from its inaugural event to the Medical College was welcome news indeed," said College President and CEO T. Michael Bolger, JD. "Despite their loss, these generous people put forth an impressive effort that will help educate future colon cancer researchers and help scientists develop better tools to diagnose and treat the disease."

For more information on Bobbie or the Bobbie Nick Voss Charitable Funds, visit www.bobbiesays.com.