

**UAMS News Bureau**

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**News Release**  
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**Larry Crain Sr. Honors Wife, Family with \$1 Million Pledge  
to UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has received a \$1 million pledge from Larry Crain Sr. to support the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute’s pursuit of National Cancer Institute Designation.

In appreciation of the gift, UAMS will rename the Seed of Hope Garden on the Cancer Institute’s ground floor as the Janett Crain Seed of Hope Garden, after Crain’s late wife, who died in 2018 after a brief battle with cancer.

“I just want to honor her and the things she did, not only in our personal lives, but also the things she’s done for all the communities we’ve lived in,” Crain said. “I didn’t realize how many lives she affected until after her death. There were so many people who made me aware of things she did for them that I otherwise wouldn’t have known about.”

The gift also honors Janett’s caregivers, as well as Crain’s sister-in-law, who survived advanced lung cancer thanks to a clinical trial and is now cancer-free. “I want to think that making this commitment will create results for someone else in a similar way,” Crain said.

NCI Designation is awarded through a highly competitive assessment process during which cancer centers must demonstrate outstanding depth and breadth of high-quality cancer research. Receiving designation brings substantial benefits, including the ability to access federal research funding and offer clinical trials not available to non-designated centers. It also is expected to result in a \$72 million economic impact on Arkansas and create about 1,500 new jobs over five years.

There are 71 NCI-designated cancer centers in 36 states across the country, with the closest to Arkansas being in Memphis (pediatrics only), Dallas and Oklahoma City.

“This incredible gift will provide critical resources to the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute as we pursue NCI Designation,” said Michael Birrer, M.D., Ph.D., vice chancellor and director of the Cancer Institute. “With NCI Designation comes access to the latest in clinical trials and therapies for our patients. Renaming the Seed of Hope

Garden is a fitting way to honor Janett, who inspired so many with her example and service.”

The Seed of Hope is a seed-shaped sculpture carved by local artist Michael Warrick from a 3,700-pound piece of Turkish marble. It is a symbol of hope and healing for patients at the Cancer Institute. A small garden surrounds the sculpture. On each patient’s final day of active treatment, they are presented with two seed-shaped tokens. One token is placed in the sculpture as a celebration of survivorship. The second is taken with them to keep or pass on to someone else as their own symbol of hope. The Seed of Hope Garden is one of the most-visited areas in the Cancer Institute, and every instance of another patient placing their token in the sculpture is a celebration.

Larry Crain Sr. earned his accounting degree from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in 1963 and joined Crain Automotive, Inc., a general merchandise and auto parts business begun by his father, in 1966. Eventually that expanded into Crain Sales in Searcy, Arkansas. Over time, the company acquired other auto parts distribution businesses and expanded to 16 locations. In 1991, this expanded to auto dealerships. Crain is now president of Crain Management Group LLC, a holding company with majority interests in a group of diversified companies. The holdings include interests in 19 auto and RV dealerships, automotive parts distributors, and radio and TV broadcasting as well as investment real estate.

Larry and Janett were high school sweethearts and married while attending the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. Over the decades, Janett served as a much-loved and respected mother figure to the Crain Automotive Team. She was a schoolteacher and an active volunteer in her children’s schools and in the community. “Grandy,” as she was affectionately known by her nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, leaves a legacy as a mother and community volunteer that continues to live on.

UAMS is the state’s only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and seven institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute and Institute for Digital Health & Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS’ clinical enterprise including its hospital, regional clinics and clinics it operates or staffs in cooperation with other providers. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. *U.S. News & World Report* named UAMS Medical Center the state’s Best Hospital; ranked its ear, nose and throat program among the top 50 nationwide; and named six areas as high performing — COPD, colon cancer surgery, heart failure, hip replacement, knee replacement and lung cancer surgery. UAMS has 2,876 students, 898 medical residents and four dental residents. It is the state’s largest public employer with more than 10,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children’s Hospital, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit [www.uams.edu](http://www.uams.edu) or [www.uamshealth.com](http://www.uamshealth.com). Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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