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[ADMISSIONS](#)   [ACADEMICS](#)   [RESEARCH](#)   [IT SERVICES](#)   [LIBRARIES](#)   [ATHLETICS](#)

[NEWS HOME PAGE](#)  
[NEWS RELEASES](#)  
[FACULTY EXPERTS](#)  
[CAMPUS NEWS](#)  
[UALBANY IN THE NEWS](#)  
[PHOTOS](#)  
[MEDIA RELATIONS OFFICE](#)

[Search  
News Website](#)

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 [Email Page Link](#)  
 [Printer Friendly](#)

## Release

### UAlbany Opens New Cancer Research Center

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ALBANY, N.Y. (October 18, 2005) -- University at Albany President Kermit L. Hall, joined by New York State Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno, officially opened the doors to the University's new [Gen\\*NY\\*Sis Center for Excellence in Cancer Genomics](#) and unveiled its Wall of Memory and Hope. The \$45 million facility, which hosts scientists committed to discovering the genetic origins of cancer and who conduct research into finding a cure for the disease, is the cornerstone to New York State's Gen\*NY\*Sis (Generating Employment Through New York Science) program, a \$500 million initiative in government and private investment to lure new life science industries to the state and make New York a leader in creating biotechnology jobs.

Located on the University at Albany Foundation's East Campus in Rensselaer, the new Center combines UAlbany research expertise in genomics and biomedical sciences with state-of-the-art technology in a new 117,000 square foot building. Bruno, honorary chair of the Fund for Memory and Hope, was instrumental in securing \$24.9 million in state support to help launch the Center.

The University also announced a \$200,000 challenge gift from Walter and Anne Robb for the Fund for Memory and Hope. Walter Robb is former senior vice president and group executive, medical systems division at General Electric. The gift will help equip the facility and support cutting-edge research. The Imaging and Histology Laboratory will be named in recognition of the gift.

"This state-of-the-art facility will help us to continue to attract top-flight scientists in biotechnology and biomedical sciences, thereby enhancing the research portfolio of the University and the Capital Region," said Hall. "On behalf of the University community, I would like to thank Senator Bruno for his visionary Gen\*NY\*Sis program and leadership in making this facility a reality. We are also grateful to Walter and Anne Robb for supporting the work of our scientists in their efforts to discover the genetic origins of disease."

"The Capital Region is fortunate to have some of the best and brightest researchers in the field working at the Center to research and develop innovative technology in the fight against cancer," said Senator Bruno. "As a cancer survivor, the opening of this Center means so much to me on a personal level. Nothing would make me happier than to see this Center, right in my backyard, produce the technology for a cure that will spare future generations the pain caused by this devastating disease."

"This building, with its spacious laboratories and core facilities, is one of the reasons why the University is able to attract nationally recognized cancer researchers to the region," said Walter Robb. "We hope our gift will encourage others to support the groundbreaking work being done here. This research brings hope for a cure to the many people confronted with cancer."

"This building is a symbol of hope for all those afflicted with cancer," said Center

Director Paulette McCormick of the Department of Biomedical Sciences. "The support of all those who have given to the Wall of Memory and Hope is instrumental in our research efforts. We are thankful for the continued support by our community members for this building and the fund."

Following the ribbon cutting ceremony, the University also unveiled the Wall of Memory and Hope, a two-story centerpiece in the atrium of the facility. The wall displays dedicated plaques in memory of cancer victims, in hope for a cure or in gratitude for the continued health of survivors. Support generated through the Center's Fund for Memory and Hope is used for special equipment and outfitting the needs of the research program. Mary Polsinello Hanley made the first gift to the Fund for Memory and Hope in honor of her late son, James, who died of brain cancer in 2002. To date, 27 donors have made contributions to the fund.

The Center was designed by the architectural firm Einhorn Yaffee Prescott (EYP). "This building recognizes that scientific discovery is enhanced by collaboration," said Tom Birdsey, EYP's president and CEO. "This facility will encourage researchers to interact both in and outside their laboratories."

Several scientists have joined the Center and embarked on ground-breaking research supported by more than \$7 million in grants. They include:

- **Julio Aguirre-Ghiso**, an assistant professor of biomedical sciences, is studying ways to stop the metastatic growth of cancer cells.
- **Thomas Begley**, an assistant professor of biomedical sciences, is researching cellular responses to chemotherapeutic drugs used to treat cancer.
- **Douglas S. Conklin**, an assistant professor of biomedical sciences, is identifying new genes that contribute to the tumorigenicity of breast cancer cells.
- **Chittibabu Guda**, an assistant professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, is developing computational algorithms, databases and web servers for DNA and protein data analysis.
- **Igor Kuznetsov**, an assistant professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, is applying a variety of statistical and classification methods to biological sequences related to human diseases.
- **Scott Tenenbaum**, an assistant professor of biomedical sciences, is studying how and why genes are regulated in human cells.

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[▲ TOP](#)

[University at Albany Home Page](#)

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[Admissions](#) | [Academics](#) | [Research](#) | [IT Services](#) | [Libraries](#) | [Athletics](#)