

A mayor battles a large brain tumor threatening his sight and ability to communicate. A college football star overcomes Hodgkin's lymphoma then joins the NFL. A family-focused woman finds relief after a decade of suffering from severe asthma. In the following pages, you'll meet these patients who triumphed over complex medical conditions, made possible by UPMC's expert physicians and their dedication to providing compassionate care to patients from across the U.S.

Also, you'll read about UPMC's investment in Pittsburgh's future, with the building of three state-of-the-art specialty hospitals.

# STORIES OF RESILIENCE AND STRENGTH



**“I have an appreciation for life I’ve never had before.”**

**Mark Boughton  
Mayor, Danbury, Conn.**

**Robert Friedlander, MD**  
Neurosurgeon



# MAYOR BEATS DANGEROUS BRAIN TUMOR

**M**ark Boughton is a busy man. His daily routine as the mayor of Danbury, Conn. consists of countless meetings, hundreds of phone calls and emails, and barely enough time to squeeze in a quick lunch.

Describing himself as “an extremely energetic person,” Mark was always ready to tackle whatever lay ahead of him. But one day that all changed. “I started to get extremely tired in the middle of the afternoon for no reason,” Mark says. “This just wasn’t how my body functioned.”

As time went on, Mark’s exhaustion continued and he began having terrible headaches. Then, something happened that made him extremely worried. He lost his vision for 25 minutes.

## Rare Diagnosis

Mark immediately went to the emergency room, where doctors found a mass the size of a lemon inside his brain. The mass was later determined to be an epidermoid cyst, or tumor, which forms during embryonic development. A cluster of skin cells gets trapped and grows slowly over the years, until the cyst starts to cause symptoms like the headaches, exhaustion, and vision loss that Mark experienced. While it wasn’t cancer, the cyst would continue to grow and cause devastating symptoms, including increasing vision loss and the inability to speak.

“What good is a mayor who can’t communicate?” he asks.

Mark consulted with numerous doctors in Boston and New York, and repeatedly was given the name of Dr. Robert Friedlander, chairman of the UPMC Department of Neurosurgery.

“We have great doctors and hospitals in this area,” Mark says. “But after speaking with Dr. Friedlander and learning more about his expertise, I knew that he was the right guy.”

## A Complex Surgical Approach

Because the cyst in Mark’s brain was surrounded by important brain tissue and arteries, Dr. Friedlander used an advanced brain imaging technology known as High Definition Fiber Tracking (HDFT) to determine the best approach to surgery.

“During the surgery, HDFT played an important role because we used the scans as a roadmap to navigate around important brain structures and remove the cyst,” Dr. Friedlander says.

When Mark woke up in the intensive care unit, Dr. Friedlander was there to tell him that the cyst was completely gone. “I shouted and pumped my fists when he told me that,” Mark says.

## Back to City Hall

In a little more than a week, Mark returned home and picked up right where he left off — at City Hall.

“I wanted to get right back to work,” Mark says. “I did only a few hours a day at first, but then I was able to get right back to working full time, just like I had been before any of this started.”

Now, as Mark gears up for a run for governor, he’s thankful that the team at UPMC successfully removed the cyst and got him back to feeling 100 percent.

“I have an appreciation for life I’ve never had before,” he says. “Dr. Friedlander and everyone at UPMC were truly incredible. They’re the best in the world at what they do. Period.”



Stanley Marks, MD  
Medical Oncologist

# UNSTOPPABLE FORCE

In September of 2015, James Conner began his junior year as one of the best college football players in the country. The year before, he rushed for 1,765 yards, had 26 touchdowns, and was named the Atlantic Coast Conference Player of the Year. But then catastrophe struck. During Pitt's season opener against Youngstown State, he tore his MCL. It was a season-ending injury with months of rehab. He was crushed to be torn away from the game he loved. But that wasn't the worst of it.

"I was rehabbing my knee, and while I'm lifting I can see that I'm getting out of breath really fast," James says. "My face was swelling up. I had dizziness a lot."

James visited an ear, nose, and throat specialist, who ordered an X-ray of James' chest, which led to a positron emission tomography (PET) scan — and the discovery of a large tumor near his superior vena cava, the main vein that drains blood from the upper body. The tumor was diagnosed as stage 2 Hodgkin's lymphoma, meaning it had likely started in his neck and spread to his chest.

"I was just dumbfounded, mostly. First a torn MCL, and now cancer?" he says. "It's just one of those things you never expect to be said to you."

## Ready for Battle

But James was a fighter. He wanted to beat it. And he would do anything he could to make that happen. Some encouraging words from his medical oncologist, Stanley Marks, MD, chairman of UPMC Hillman Cancer Center, helped jumpstart that.

"During one of the press conferences, I heard him say that the cancer I had was 85% curable," James says. "It gave me a lot of hope."

Over the next six months, James fought through 12 rounds of chemotherapy, each more difficult than the previous. His teammates stuck by his side throughout, providing support whenever he needed it. He was so determined to make a comeback to football, he was doing things even his doctor couldn't believe.

"James would come in for treatment, and then go to the gym the next day at 5:30 in the morning and work out extremely hard with all his teammates," says Dr. Marks. "I couldn't believe it. He's definitely a fighter."

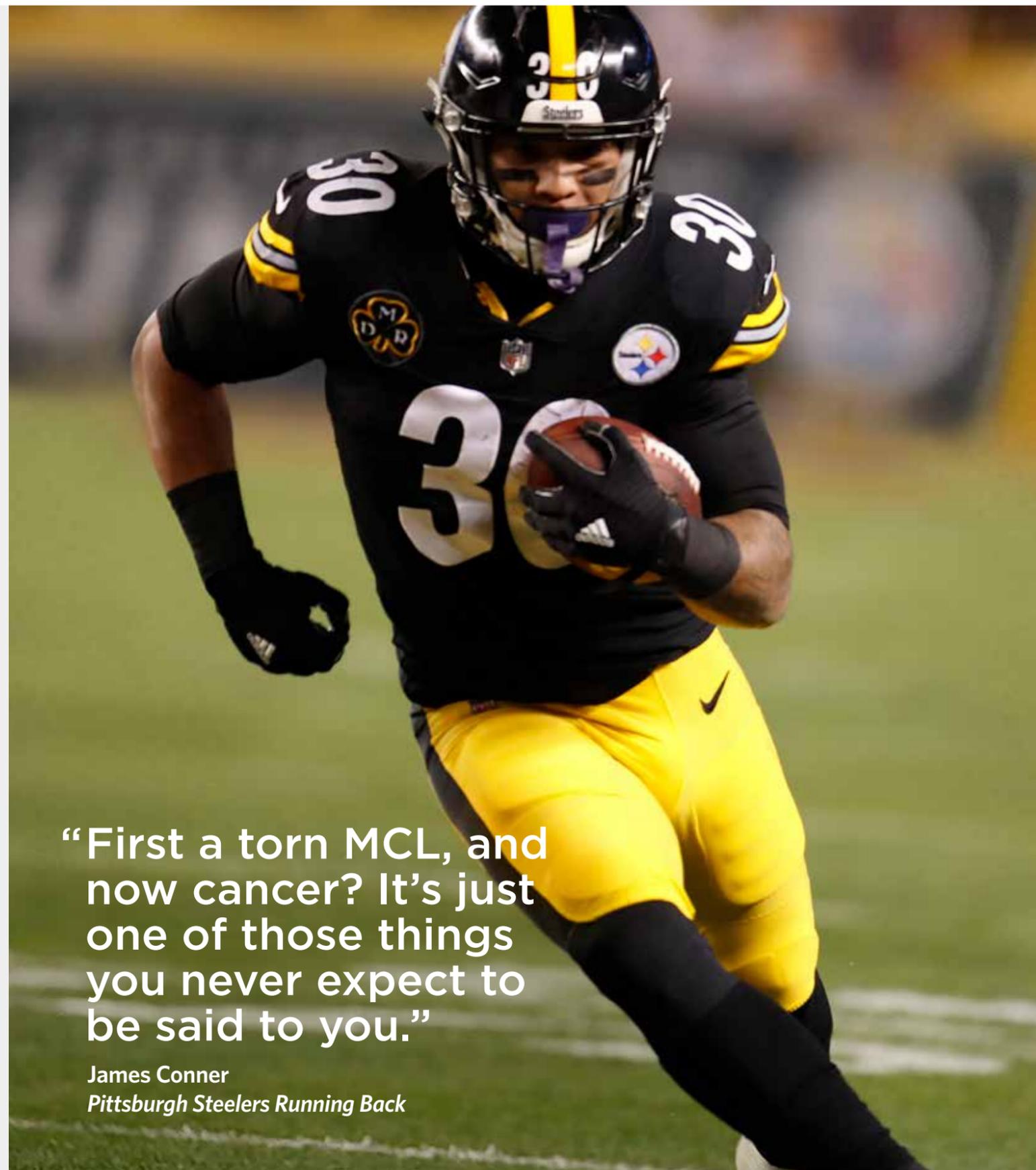
## Cancer's Time is Up

On May 23, 2016, he got the most important call of his life. It was Dr. Marks, who told James he was cancer free. A complete remission.

"I couldn't stop thanking him," James says. "It was like the biggest weight had been lifted off my shoulders."

James returned to the lineup that fall and played in all 13 of Pitt's games. He ran for 132 yards in the Panthers' upset win against number-two-ranked Clemson. He was back to being an elite player less than four months after beating cancer. And all his hard work payed off. James was drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers in the third round of the 2017 NFL draft.

"It's a dream come true," James says. "To be where I was at in 2015 and now I'm in the NFL...it's truly amazing."



**"First a torn MCL, and now cancer? It's just one of those things you never expect to be said to you."**

James Conner  
Pittsburgh Steelers Running Back

“When you’re with Dr. Wenzel, you feel like you’re her only patient.”

Tere Long  
Traveling Patient



Sally E. Wenzel, MD  
Pulmonologist



## FINDING HER BREATH

**B**ack in 1997, two years after moving to Chicago with her husband and three children, Tere Long noticed that routine household activities were leaving her exhausted and short of breath. Local doctors diagnosed Tere with allergy-induced asthma. She started taking traditional asthma medications, but they were only slightly effective.

After more than a decade of unsuccessful treatment, Tere reached her breaking point. “I was really having to think through every aspect of my day to limit climbing the stairs and overexerting myself,” she says. In addition to shortness of breath and exhaustion, she developed severe tightness in her chest. Tere was tired of the disease controlling her life and decided to take charge.

Her doctor referred her to an asthma clinic where she underwent a bronchoscopy. When that test was inconclusive, Tere’s medical team recommended she be evaluated for a lung transplant.

Preparing for the worst, Tere and her husband thoroughly researched transplant programs in the U.S. They were both impressed with UPMC’s rich transplant history and made the decision to travel to Pittsburgh. After a full work-up, the transplant team was convinced that Tere’s lungs were salvageable, and referred her to Sally E. Wenzel, MD, a world-renowned asthma expert and researcher at the University of Pittsburgh Asthma Institute at UPMC.

### Connected with Advanced Care

Every few months, Tere traveled nearly 500 miles each way from Chicago to Pittsburgh to be closely monitored by Dr. Wenzel and her team. She was prescribed medications that helped ease her symptoms for a few years. But in 2013,

after moving to St. Petersburg, Fla., her symptoms began to get worse.

Dr. Wenzel recommended Tere undergo a lung biopsy, which revealed autoimmune issues, and subsequently Sjögren’s Syndrome. This is a disease in which the immune system attacks the glands that make moisture for the body, including the lungs. Factoring in a previous diagnosis of ulcerative colitis, Dr. Wenzel put Tere on immunosuppressants to reduce her immune system’s errant attacks on her body. Dr. Wenzel also added a monthly injectable medicine to help prevent severe asthma attacks.

Since then, Tere’s symptoms have steadily improved to the point that she only visits Dr. Wenzel a few times a year. She doesn’t mind traveling 1,000 miles each way from Fla., because of the personalized care she receives. “When you’re with Dr. Wenzel, you feel like you’re her only patient,” Tere says.

### Family First

Last year, Tere went to Seattle, Wash. for the birth of her daughter’s twins. She spent nearly two months helping with everything from grocery shopping and laundry to bathing and caring for the babies. “Had I been asked to help out in the past, my asthma would have flared and I would have been a burden to my daughter instead of helping her,” Tere says.

Back at home in St. Petersburg, Tere and her husband enjoy boating, fishing, community events, and outings with their dog, as well as caring for her daughter’s two horses.

“Now I don’t have to think about juggling the minutes of the day so I can function,” she says. “Because of Dr. Wenzel I have my life back.”

# Today We Build:

## UPMC's Pioneering Vision for the Future

### UPMC Vision and Rehabilitation Hospital

The 300,000-square-foot facility is expected to open in 2020 and will be built near UPMC Mercy. This hospital will specialize in advanced vision care and research, and will offer technology-assisted rehabilitation to restore mobility for patients with wide-ranging physical and cognitive challenges.

*"Our vision services will be easy to access, both in person and through telemedicine. We will implement cutting-edge techniques for cataract and refractive surgery, corneal disease technologies, and novel retina therapies. We are also developing programs on brain-computer interfaces to stimulate the brain directly in the blind. This will be the next generation hospital, one that is fully connected and focused on patient experience."*

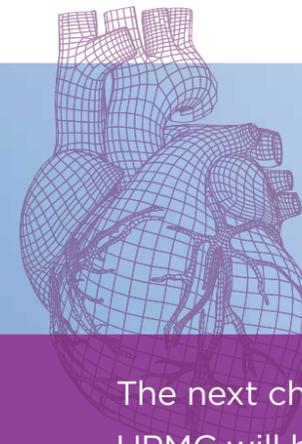


**José-Alain Sahel, MD**  
Chair, Department of Ophthalmology  
Director, UPMC Eye Center

*"The new rehabilitation facility will be a center of innovation and an incubator for new technologies. We'll explore the healing power of biology and engineering through regenerative rehabilitation, robotics-assisted therapies, and personalized exercise-based approaches to help patients regain function as they recover. And by centralizing the researchers, clinicians, and therapists, we will not just impact patient care, but create a roadmap for future research."*



**Gwendolyn Sowa, MD, PhD**  
Chair, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation  
Director, UPMC Rehabilitation Institute



The next chapter of health care is on the horizon. Over the next five years, UPMC will build three new specialty hospitals offering innovative treatments in technology-enhanced facilities — all tailored to patients' needs.

### UPMC Hillman Cancer Hospital

The UPMC Hillman Cancer Hospital will include a 240,000-square-foot patient tower and 160,000-square-foot outpatient center built near UPMC Shadyside. Expected to open in 2022, the facility will offer comprehensive care for rare cancers and innovative clinical trials utilizing the latest technologies.

*"As the region's only Comprehensive Cancer Center designated by the National Cancer Institute, we have demonstrated our expertise in providing the highest level of cancer care and research. The new hospital will allow us to build upon our history of success in fostering close collaboration between physicians and researchers. We expect this to accelerate our efforts so that new discoveries in the lab can more quickly become innovative treatments for patients."*



**Stanley M. Marks, MD**  
Chief, Division of Hematology/Oncology at UPMC Shadyside  
Chairman, UPMC Hillman Cancer Center

### UPMC Heart and Transplant Hospital

The 15-story, 620-bed facility will be the largest of the three new hospitals and will be located at UPMC Presbyterian. The hospital will build on UPMC's pioneering legacy in the field of organ transplantation and will offer the most advanced organ transplant and cardiac procedures.

*"The new hospital will further explore advances in molecular technology, imaging, and predictive modeling that allow us to tailor personalized care for patients suffering from cardiovascular disease. Not only can we perform transplants and place artificial hearts, we can now routinely replace a valve while the patient is awake and the heart is beating."*



**Joon Sup Lee, MD**  
Chief, Division of Cardiology  
Co-Director, UPMC Heart and Vascular Institute



*"From living-donor liver transplants to immune therapy, we are excited to push frontiers and continue the rich legacy established by Dr. Thomas Starzl. We will design the hospital to ensure it is patient-centered and delivers the highest quality care. Our goal is to provide the most innovative and comprehensive transplant care available anywhere in the world."*

**Abhinav Humar, MD**  
Chief, Division of Transplantation  
UPMC Department of Surgery  
Clinical Director, Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute