

Thank you, Massey Club members, for your generous annual support.  
Together, we are unrelenting in the fight against cancer.

## For 50 years,

through innovative research, patient care, education and community engagement, Massey has been unwavering in its effort to better understand, prevent, detect and treat cancer – and to make these advances available to all. Philanthropic support is vital to the center’s mission, and we are so grateful for the investment of Massey Club members.



## Leading-edge research impacting our patients and beyond

### Drug resistance discovery could move the field forward for breast cancer treatment

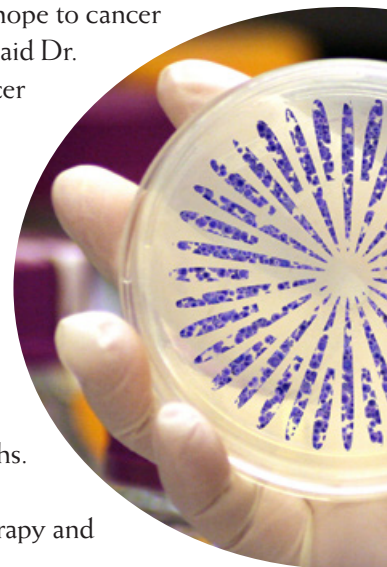


New research out of Massey, led by **Yuesheng Zhang, M.D., Ph.D.**, revealed a previously unknown biological process through which breast tumor cells develop resistance to standard treatment. The discovery could open the door for cancer scientists around the world to further target this vulnerability in hopes of creating more effective therapies for the disease. Additionally, the research team tested a promising drug in combination with an existing therapy, achieving total remission in one breast cancer model that was resistant to the standard of care and reducing cancer growth by nearly 70% in other models of advanced disease. “Overcoming drug resistance is very important; we’re talking about developing new drugs that will provide hope to cancer patients who have exhausted all options available to them,” said Dr. Zhang, the Harrigan, Haw and Luck Families Chair in Cancer Research and a member of the Developmental Therapeutics research program at Massey. **M**

### New two-step treatment approach for aggressive brain cancer aims to improve survival rates

Glioblastoma multiforme (GBM) is an aggressive type of brain cancer with a typical survival time of only 12-15 months. Current treatments have only slightly improved survival. Standard treatment involves surgery, followed by chemotherapy and radiation, but better treatments are desperately needed.

Massey researcher, **Kristoffer Valerie, Ph.D.**, is testing a new drug called an ATM kinase inhibitor (ATMi) that, in lab tests, makes GBM cells more sensitive to radiation. Dr. Valerie’s study is exploring a new two-step approach: combining ATMi with an antibody that boosts the body’s immune response against the tumor in the hope that this combined treatment might significantly improve survival rates for GBM patients. **M**



# MASSEY CLUB

## IMPACT REPORT

### Cancer-focused research training and education

As a national leader in cancer research training and education, Massey supports the development of emerging scientists from high school to early professional careers. Our programs emphasize diversifying the cancer workforce and attracting individuals to long-term careers in cancer-related fields. Through the Cancer Research Training and Education Coordination Program, Massey offers several mentorship and career opportunities that include participating in cancer research events, seminars and educational workshops. **M**

#### The Walter Lawrence Scholars Initiative

Named after Massey's founding director, the Walter Lawrence Scholars Initiative (WLSI) offers exposure to career pathways for diverse populations interested in oncology-related careers in scientific writing and science communication. Interns gain an understanding of opportunities within the field of biomedical research and the qualities of humanism and medical excellence that Dr. Lawrence exemplified in his interactions with patients and colleagues.

**Emily Brocato**, a former WLSI Fellow, received her Ph.D. in pharmacology and toxicology from the VCU School of Medicine in 2023. Emily was hired in the Clinical Trials Office as a protocol writer after her time in the WLSI program. **M**



**"The Cancer Research Training and Education Coordination Program at Massey was instrumental in shaping my career. The mentorship and career development opportunities provided through the Walter Lawrence Scholars Initiative were invaluable. I am deeply grateful for the guidance and support that have led me to my role in the Clinical Trials Office." — EMILY BROCATO '23**



### MASSEY by the NUMBERS

**\$13,410,969**

Total raised for Massey in FY24

**\$2,931,260**

Unrestricted total raised through Massey Club (\$1,000 - \$49,999)



*"Massey Club members are such a vital part of Team Massey. Your contributions are a critical component in building a stronger infrastructure, providing resources for our brilliant researchers, giving our community members access to lifesaving clinical trials and ultimately saving more lives." — BECKY MASSEY, Chair, Massey Advisory Board*



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To learn more about research at Massey or to renew your gift to Massey Club, please contact Robinette Tiller at **masseyclub@vcu.edu**.

To opt out of receiving fundraising communications from VCU Health, contact 1-844-445-9126 or **FundraisingOptOut@vcuhealth.org**