



*Shorty Kroger, Country Music Superstar Toby Keith, and Chery Magoteaux-Cody at a Rein In Cancer Benefit*

## Rein In Cancer: A Bit of History

In 2006, Shorty Koger of Shorty's Caboy Hattery began raising money to do something to commemorate her sister who lost her fight with cancer. The problem was that in her grief, Shorty didn't know exactly what. Seemingly out of thin air, an answer appeared.

At the 2006 AQHA World Championship Show, amateur exhibitor Tracie Anderson ordered a custom hat from Shorty's Caboy Hattery. A few weeks later, she stopped by Shorty's store in the OKC Stockyards to pick it up and saw a memorial to Shorty's sister, Shirley Bowman.

"Clearly she was raising money," Tracie remembers. "And I asked her, 'What are you doing with the money you're raising?'"

Shorty said, "I've been waiting for somebody to walk through the door and tell me what to do with it."

Tracie said, "Well, I'm here, so write the check." She wasn't really kidding. At the time, Tracie was the Clinical Operations Director for the OU Cancer Institute, the University of Oklahoma's cancer research and treatment facility.

As they talked further, Tracie found that Shorty's sister had not had health insurance, and Shorty had helped her navigate the complex process of getting treatment. It was during Shirley's treatment that Shorty was diagnosed with cancer, herself. Shirley passed away and Shorty recovered, and was left with a growing passion for helping patients who didn't have the means to pay for treatment.

That's where the OU Cancer Institute came in. "We were the only place in the state where an unfunded patient could come and receive care," Tracie explains.

The two of them saw a vision for the future, based on input from the medical team. "Cancer is not just about the day you get therapy," said Dr. Robert Mannel, Director of the OU Cancer Institute. "We want to offer a patient-centered approach, where we're not just looking at providing medical therapy, but also patient and family counseling, nutrition services, social services, etc."

The problem is that this takes a lot of resources, which must have alternative funding, since there's no traditional funding from insurance companies to cover it. With that in mind, Shorty and Tracie set out to fund the Shirley Bowman Nutrition Clinic at the facility known then as the OU Cancer Institute. Their fund-raising goal was \$250,000. If they could reach that, there were funds to match it for a \$500,000 endowment to provide nutrition services for the institute's cancer patients.

It is a critical need. "Nutrition means that you can get through therapy," Mannel explained. "Nutrition means that your immune system stays activated so you can fight the cancer with all your internal resources."

The ball was rolling and Shorty continued to raise money toward the goal, with Tracie working behind the scenes. Then, in 2007, Cheryl Magoteaux (now Magoteaux-Cody) became involved. The cause was and remains close to Cheryl's heart as she had recently lost a close friend to cancer. Through her contributions to the center, the main treatment room at the Institute was named in her friend, June Comby's honor.

The three created Rein In Cancer, which began to quickly generate even more funds toward the goal through fundraising efforts at equine events. Cheryl orchestrated fundraisers at various National Reined Cow Horse Association and National Reining Horse Association events throughout the country. Even the American Quarter Horse Association and the All American Quarter Horse Congress joined the cause, with a special day at the AQHA World Championship Show.

In May 2007, upon the completion of Remington Park's Betting on A Cure Day, which benefited both Rein In Cancer and Ally's House, the team's first goal was reached.

"When you connect a passion with an opportunity, you can do great things," Mannel continued. "People who are passionate about their horses are people emotionally connected to life. They resonate with those who are sick and who need help."

Shorty was emotional when she heard that enough money had been raised for the Shirley

Bowman Nutrition Clinic. "Words cannot express how grateful I am to all the people who have helped make this dream a reality, especially those in the equine industry. I want to give back because of what everyone has given me," Shorty shared. "My heart goes out to all the people who can't afford treatment or do not have insurance. I always wonder if Shirley would be here today if she had had insurance and went to the doctor sooner."

Tracie agreed and added, "Seeing the patients that benefit from this service has made all of the hard work so rewarding, and we are so grateful to all the individuals, groups and clubs that have aided us so far.

While the group knews that reaching that goal was an incredible victory, they also realized that the battle goes on. Rein In Cancer became a 501C3 tax deductible corporation so they could offer tax benefits to donors. Statistics show that 3 out of 5 people will get cancer at some time in their life. Nearly half the patients who develop cancer will die of their disease.

"That fact alone is reason enough to continue," said Cody. "Reaching that goal was huge and I know I, like many others, was honored to be able to be a small part of it. But it was only a first step. There's always tomorrow, and always another need in this battle. Rein in Cancer is our way to keep doing our part - and we are committed to keep giving the horse world a chance to make a difference."

The OU Cancer Institute continues to grow, and has been renamed the Charles and Peggy Stephenson Cancer Center. As the facility grows, so does the need for nutrition services. In two years, from 2014 to 2016, the number of new cancer patients under the care of the Shirley Bowman Nutrition Center increased by an astonishing 74%. While the increase may seem unsettling, it also means that more patients know about the program and are receiving the nutritional benefits they need without having to pay a cent thanks to donors like you and programs like Rein In Cancer.

While Rein In Cancer continues to support the Shirley Bowman Nutrition Center, in 2012 it began to make direct payments to people in the horse industry undergoing cancer treatment.

For information on Rein In Cancer, visit the website at <http://www.reinincancer.com>.