$1 Million Gift Will Expand Cancer Drug Trials

WICHITA (AP) - A former Kansas lawmaker's bout with cancer led him to donate $1 million toward research in his home state.

Frank Gaines, who served in both houses of the Legislature and is now a member of the Kansas Board of Regents, was treated for esophageal cancer last year at the Mayo Clinic.

"I can afford to do that, but a lot of people can't," said Gaines, 72, who lives in Hamilton.

The gift from Gaines and his wife, Beverly, was announced Thursday.

It will fund a professorship in Wichita for the University of Kansas Cancer Center and will help bring early stage cancer drug trials to the Wichita area.

The new professor will be the medical director of the center's oncology outpatient unit and will be responsible for developing a Phase I clinical trial research program.

Phase I is the earliest stage of human testing.

"These types of trials really represent the cutting edge," said Roy Jensen, director of the Kansas Masonic Cancer Research Institute, the research arm of the Cancer Center.

Phase II and III testing already is available in Wichita through the Wichita Community Clinical Oncology program, a cooperative of doctors and hospitals throughout the state.

The gift is part of the Kansas Masonic Foundation's Partnership for Life Campaign, which is trying to raise $15 million to support the research institute's long-range plan.

The institute also is trying to earn designation as a cancer care center from the National Cancer Institute and has pledged to serve all of Kansas and the Midwest.
Spending Issues Resolved By Negotiators

TOPEKA (AP) -- Issues resolved Sunday by House and Senate negotiators drafting the final version of a bill wrapping up budget issues for the year:

MEDICAID SETTLEMENT: Provide the final piece of a $90 million settlement between the state and federal officials over how the state spent money under the Medicaid program, which provides medical services to the needy. Federal officials accused the state of drawing down too much money in the past; the settlement avoids larger penalties.

WAITING LISTS: An additional $9.9 million to provide home-based services for Kansans with developmental disability and shorten the waiting list for those services, as the House proposed. But no additional funds for similar programs for autistic children, when the House proposed $744,417.

MENTAL HEALTH: An additional $7 million for community mental health centers, the House's proposal, twice as much as the Senate approved.

MEDICAL EDUCATION: No new additional dollars for the University of Kansas medical school's program in Wichita, as the Senate had proposed. The House had approved an additional $6.7 million for additional faculty and programs.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS: $4.5 million for grants to community corrections programs, to help them prevent offenders from being removed and sent to prison for violating conditions placed on them. That's the House's position; the Senate proposed was $2.6 million.

PROVIDER REIMBURSEMENTS: An extra $3.8 million to increase reimbursement rates for groups providing home-based services to the disabled and addiction treatment and to centers providing intermediate care to the developmentally disabled. Amount is halfway between House and Senate positions.

COMMUNITY SERVICES: An additional $3 million for community groups providing services to the developmentally disabled, twice what the Senate had proposed. The House hadn't proposed anything extra.

HEALTH CLINICS: Provide $2 million to allow communities' primary health care clinics to expand and offer dental services, the Senate's position. The House had proposed $2.5 million.

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY: No funding for the special election, proposed for Feb. 2, 2008. The House included $1.66 million but the Senate set aside no money.

HOMELAND SECURITY: $1.6 million for a new "Fusion Center," a multi-agency team analyzing information for homeland security purposes, the House's proposal. The Senate provided no money.

TINY-K: No additional money for a special Department of Health and Environment program providing services for infants and toddlers, known as Tiny-K. That's the Senate position; the House had approved $700,000.

NO SMOKES: An extra $400,000 for a new program to help prevent tobacco sales for minors, the Senate's proposal. House members had sought twice as much.

DEAF CHILDREN: The Legislature will study funding a special program providing services to deaf children under 4. The Senate proposed spending $398,200, but the House did not provide any money.

TECH GRANTS: Create a new program providing grants to technical schools for new equipment and internship programs, at a cost of $180,500. Both chambers approved but designated different funding sources.

JUDICIAL STAFFING: No new support staff for the court system, the House's position. Lawmakers have already approved five new jobs, but the Senate wanted to make it 10, costing an additional $170,000.

NO AUDIT: No money for an audit by the Kansas Corporation Commission of Kansas City's Board of Public Utilities. The Senate sought $100,000, while the House put in no money.

DNA ANALYSIS: An additional $60,000 for the Kansas Bureau of Investigation for analyzing DNA samples, the House's position. The Senate sought $237,418.
By Congressman Jerry Moran
R-Hays

Welcome to “This Week in Congress.” Our nation mourns this week after the shootings at Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, Virginia. My prayers are with the families, faculty, students and staff affected by this tragic event.

This week, the House passed legislation to give the District of Columbia a vote in the House of Representatives and legislation to improve our nation’s waterways. Also passed this week was a bill to allow shareholders to have a say on the compensation awarded to corporate executives.

“Days of Remembrance” — Commemorating the Victims of the Holocaust

This week was our nation’s annual commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust established by Congress as “Days of Remembrance.” I observed their memory by visiting the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. The death and dehumanization experienced by Jews is moving when seen through the pictures and stories displayed in that building. Those who know about the Jews’ suffering often repeat the phrase “Never Again”—even now as genocide is happening in Darfur, Sudan. On Wednesday, I returned to the museum to hear President Bush honor the Holocaust victims by addressing the present day genocide. I delivered a speech to the House of Representatives later that day about this issue. I want to make sure my colleagues do not forget what happened 60 years ago and help make them aware of the current situation in Sudan.

Working to Modernize Guard and Reserve Benefits

I have sponsored legislation to modernize benefits for Americans serving in the National Guard and Reserve. Though close to 500,000 members of the Guard and Reserve have been called up since September 11, their benefits do not always match their increased service to our country. Legislation I have sponsored would lower the age of retirement for guardsmen and reservists who have served at least 20 years. Unlike active duty forces that have no age restrictions on retirement once their 20 years of service is complete, Guard and Reserve members are ineligible to receive retirement pay until they reach age 60. This legislation allows members to begin drawing their retirement pay at age 55 rather than at age 60. I am also supportive of alternative legislation that will reduce the age for receipt of retirement pay by 3 month increments for every 90 days a Guard or Reserve member spends on active duty after September 11, 2001. This allows members to retire as early as age 50. I have also sponsored legislation to enhance education benefits by allowing activated guardsmen and reservists to earn the same G.I. Bill benefits as active duty soldiers and enabling them to use those benefits after they leave the service.

From towns across Kansas, our citizen soldiers have stepped up to play an increasingly vital role in the defense of our nation, from protecting our freedoms in Iraq and Afghanistan to protecting our borders. We are asking members of the Guard and Reserve to serve alongside and take the same risks as active duty members. Their contribution has changed and so should their compensation. The reality of today’s military demands we modernize Guard and Reserve benefits to show our appreciation to these brave men and women and to improve our military’s ability to recruit and retain forces.

Counties Meet with USDA Officials to Discuss Farm Service Agency Office Closures

This week, representatives of Kansas counties affected by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) office closings were in Washington, D.C. to discuss the office closings with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials. The group met with Floyd Gaibler, Deputy Undersecretary for Farm and Foreign Agriculture, and Steve Connolly, FSA Deputy Administrator for Field Operations. A separate group of representatives were also able to meet with Theresa Lasseter, Administrator of the FSA, in Kansas City. I visited with Administrator Lasseter after the meeting to thank her for taking time to listen to the Kansas perspective on this matter.

Both meetings allowed Kansans to voice their opposition to the state FSA’s current proposal to close 11 FSA offices in Kansas and submit their own ideas to improve service. The plan is expected to be submitted to the Administrator within the next month.

Attending Junction City Mutual Self Help Housing Program Presentation

I joined State Director Chuck Banks and other representatives from USDA Rural Development on Monday to present a grant check to Junction City officials that will assist the city’s Mutual Self Help Housing Program. The USDA program helps bring new, affordable homes to rural communities, allowing families who otherwise might not be able to afford a home, do so through the contribution of labor. With the assistance of USDA and Junction City, members of the community, including Junction City High School (JCHS) students, have helped build 35 single family homes since 2003. The JCHS Industrial Technology class completed a home on their own this year.

I appreciated the opportunity to join Junction City Mayor Mike Rhoads, City Manager Rod Barnes, Assistant City Manager Mike Guinn, Commissioners Terry Heldstab and Ken Talley, and Todd Fike, the Director of Junction City’s Mutual Self Help Housing Program, for this special event.
of Ellsworth and Doug Gatewood of Columbus. Kansas rent-to-own business owners were in to advocate for the Consumer Rental-Purchase Agreement Act of 2007. In with the group were Wayne Chambers and Jim and Debbie Brown of Wichita, Marty Auble of Topeka, Jess Fisher of Arkansas City, Chuck and Arlyn Kuloa of Kansas City, Gloria Homeier-Schwien of Russell and Janet Schmidt of Beloit.

Larry Drelling of Hays was in Washington, D.C. this week attending the annual North American Agricultural Journalists meeting. Larry is a senior field editor with the High Plains Journal and stopped by to talk about current agriculture issues. Kerry McCue of Hays, Terry David of Lyons, Chris Way of Parsons and John Hultgren of Abilene were in representing the Kansas Emergency Management Services (EMS) Association to discuss federal tax treatment of EMS and emergency management vehicles, as well as other first responder issues. Julie Mulvihill and Annette Thornburgh of Topeka were in with the Kansas Humanities Council to tell me about educational programs available to Kansans.

Bill Hanson and Steve Harms of Manhattan and Sherrill Tubbs of Scott City were in with the American Association of Crop Insurers to discuss issues associated with the crop insurance industry. Arianne Fisher of Plainville and Cole Smith of Natoma were in with the People to People educational program to learn more about my role in Congress. Chris Meinhardt of Topeka was in to talk about the need to support the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. Paul Horel of Overland Park was in with the Crop Insurance Research Bureau to discuss issues associated with the crop insurance industry.

Employees of several employee-owned S corporations met with me to share their personal stories of how employee stock ownership plans have benefited them. In with the group were George Sopitck, Wayne Bargary and Mike Cheek of Kansas City; Greg Klein and Grace Ohbolz of Salina; Jim Schorgl of Leawood; Kay Crbaugh of Shawnee; and Barb Spencer of Overland Park. Fort Hays State University President Dr. Edward Hammond and Chad Harris of Kansas City were in with the National Collegiate Fraternities and Sororities to visit about legislation I am sponsoring to make contributions for infrastructure and safety improvements to collegiate housing tax-deductible.

Brian Black, Janet Lloyd-Williams, Linda Grant and Frankie Brown of Wichita were in with the Urban League of Kansas to present the 2007 State of Black America report. Mike Beam of Topeka was in with the Kansas Livestock Association (KLA) to discuss KLA's conservation program priorities for the 2007 Farm Bill. Steve Johnson of Lawrence was in with the Kansas Gas Service to tell me about a planned natural gas and liquefied natural gas pipeline that will cross Kansas. Jim French of Partridge was in with OxFam to talk about this year's farm bill. Joe Michael's of Emporia and Clarence Matlock of Chanute were in with the American Cable Association to discuss issues important to the cable television industry.

A group of Kansans concerned about Farm Service Agency office closings were in to tell me about their visit with USDA officials. In with the group were Lyle Burkhart of Cottonwood Falls; Lance and Tori Burkhart of Strong City; Marvin Beesley of Gove; Timothy James Steele of Yates Center; Ben Bennett of Junction City; Vienna Lee, Tammy Hardy and Bob and Dian Boaldin of Elkhart; and Elizabeth Hendricks of Howard. Members of the Kansas City Board of Public Utilities were in to discuss water resource projects on the Kansas and Missouri Rivers. In with the group were Joseph Dick and Jim Epp of Kansas City, Mike Armstrong of Lenexa and David Egger of Overland Park.

David Kennedy of Overland Park, President of the Military Officers Association of America's Kansas Council, of Chapters, was in to share his organization's support for measures to improve health care,
retirement benefits and pay for current and former service members. State Representative Stephanie Sharp and Angela Kreps of Lenexa were in with the Kansas Bioscience Organization to tell me about new bioscience industry projects in our state. Kimberly Gencur of Topeka was in with ITC Great Plains to discuss their proposed electrical transmission line projects in Kansas. Donna Bales of Wichita and Sandy Kuhlman of Phillipsburg were in with Hospice Services, Inc. to talk about Medicare payments for hospice care. Dr. William Clifford of Garden City and Dr. Susan Moser of Manhattan were in with the American Academy of Ophthalmology to advocate for changes to the formula Medicare uses to reimburse physicians.