

# The Power of Hope

## THE ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT of the Mucinous Ovarian Cancer Coalition



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friend:

What do I miss most about my sister, our late cofounder, Rhonda? I was recently asked this question, and it's a difficult one to answer. But I gave it a try, and it was a great reminder of how MOCC got to where it is today.

I miss her laugh and her sarcasm. Her steady hand in a crisis. Her friendship. Her endless generosity, even during a time when her own future was so uncertain. What I miss most, though, is what I miss *for* Rhonda—the chance for her to be here, living her life, growing old alongside her family and friends.

Since we launched MOCC almost five years ago, we've connected with many family members who found themselves on a journey like ours. Grieving for women they loved whose lives were cut short, their stories left unwritten. Because the mucinous subtype typically occurs in women who are significantly younger than those with other forms of ovarian cancer, a feeling shared among many people we talk with is: *She should still be here.*

None of us can control grief or the road it forces us on, but we can choose how we move forward. As we approach our five-year anniversary—which is also Rhonda's birthday—we are working to ensure that her life, lost so young, still matters. As an organization, we do that through Rhonda's Award and all the assistance and resources we offer. As a family, we accomplish this by continuing to donate our time and financial support to MOCC.

## For As Long As It Takes: Making Their Fight, Our Fight

When you look through our donor list, you'll see other families who've channeled their grief into helping us beat this disease. They've joined us in this fight in memory of a woman they lost. This last year has been an especially tough one for our community. We'd like to share a few of their stories:

- Our friend Lisa said goodbye to her daughter, Kate, who was just 19 years old. Kate's swim team recently held a fundraiser in her memory on behalf of MOCC.
- Over the winter, the family of Johnna, 32 years old, said goodbye to her. She left behind a young son. Johnna was committed to helping us find a cure, and she will be missed.
- This spring, Alyson's loved ones said their farewells to her just weeks shy of her 33rd birthday. Alyson created a video chronicling her journey, to help educate women and encourage them to be their own advocates.
- And in May, Shannon, one of the very first women we connected with when MOCC was launched, passed away. Shannon pursued every possible treatment and convinced the medical community to try new ones with her. This was another especially difficult loss.

Global estimates are that between 9,800 and 16,200 women are diagnosed annually with mucinous ovarian cancer. As we continue this work, we do so with the goal of changing that number to zero for women everywhere.

As always, we thank you for supporting the mission of MOCC and making our fight, your fight.



With Gratitude,  
*Shelley Laurell*  
President, Board of Directors  
Mucinous Ovarian Cancer Coalition/MOCC



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

One of our aims in publishing *The Power of Hope* every year is to highlight, month by month, what we've accomplished with support from each of you.

## MOCC MILESTONES



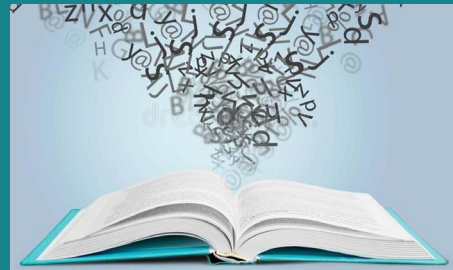
### RESEARCH

MOCC was launched almost five years ago. In that short time, **Rhonda's Award** has already funded \$100,000 in research grants!



### SUPPORT

**MOCC Cares** packages are sent to women battling this rare disease. Between 60 and 70 boxes go out each year.



### INFORMATION

A resource-rich website that connects women with vital second opinions, podcasts, blog posts, journal articles, and more.

## MONTH-BY-MONTH LOOK BACK

Here's a look back at some of the highlights July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025:

### JULY 2024



As the new fiscal year begins, MOCC mourns the loss of the chair of our Physician Advisory Committee, Dr. Michael Frumovitz. A giant in the field of GYN oncology, he was a founding member of the committee and a great support to Rhonda's family.

MOCC is approved as a Bookshop.org affiliate and begins earning 10% on all books purchased online through our store, *The Shop for Hope*.

The fourth edition of *The Power of Hope*, our annual impact report for donors, is published.

Planning begins for the first **MOCC Day of Giving**. The September 17 fundraiser will likely become an annual event.



## AUGUST 2024

A free watercolor workshop is held on Teachable for women undergoing treatment or recovering from surgery.

Dr. Aaron Shafer of the MD Anderson Cancer Center joins the MOCC Physician Advisory Committee.

## SEPTEMBER 2024

The first *MOCC Day of Giving* is held on September 17, the birthday of our late founder, Rhonda. The one-day event raises almost \$7,000 to help cover the expenses of a new website for MOCC.

Volunteer Amanda Laughlin organizes a 5K run in Washington, North Carolina. Despite significant damage caused by Hurricane Helene in western North Carolina just days before, the event attracts 216 runners and raises \$10,000 for ***Rhonda's Award***.

On Rhonda's Birthday,  
**WE GIVE!**

Today is the day.  
Please make **#HerFightYourFight**



## OCTOBER 2024

The all-volunteer team at MOCC begins gathering and outlining ideas for the new website and strategizing ways to update our current site in the interim.

## NOVEMBER 2024

We continue to benefit from supporters hosting Facebook fundraisers on our behalf. Through them, MOCC earns an average of \$148 per month.

MOCC publishes two guides specific to mucinous ovarian cancer. One is a step-by-step guide on what to do after a diagnosis of mucinous ovarian cancer, based on advice from the late Dr. Michael Frumovitz. The other, created by Dr. Kylie Gorringer, the recipient of ***Rhonda's Award 2023***, provides an overview of this rare disease.



## DECEMBER 2024

For the fourth year running, MOCC earns the "Top-Rated Nonprofit" designation from Great Nonprofits. That makes us four for four since our launch!



MOCC Sapphire Society members Scott and Michelle Schwartz make another generous donation to the organization. This one is to help with pet-care expenses for women struggling financially while undergoing treatment for mucinous ovarian cancer.



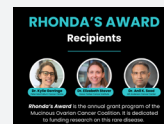
## JANUARY 2025

The new home page for the MOCC website launches. It features statistics and general information on the disease, in addition to two downloadable guides.

The cancer research community at large unexpectedly experiences significant cuts in funding at the national level, with NIH, NSF, DoD, and other programs eliminated or greatly reduced. MOCC begins encouraging supporters to call their members of Congress to ask them to block these cuts.

## FEBRUARY 2025

The **Rhonda's Award** 2025 winner, Dr. Anil Sood, and his team at the MD Anderson Cancer Center kick off a two-year project with MOCC.



Cooper City High School in Cooper City, Florida, hosts a water polo tournament and donates the proceeds to MOCC in memory of Kate Kaplan.



## MARCH 2025

MOCC is chosen as a Jūpmode "Here for Good" charity. Dozens of shirts go out to supporters to help raise awareness of our mission.



The MOCC family experiences the loss of Richard "Dick" Laurell, known as "Pops" to our cofounders, Rhonda and Shelley. (See the "In Memoriam" section to read more.)

## APRIL 2025

Amanda Laughlin, the organizer of the Washington Ovarian Cancer 5K Run in September of 2024, is named our **Volunteer of the Year**. (She's already hard at work planning the 2025 event!)



## MAY 2025

The call for abstracts for **Rhonda's Award 2026** opens on May 1. Researchers are invited to submit abstracts for projects dedicated to early detection and/or treatment options for women with mucinous ovarian cancer.

## JUNE 2025

Unfortunately, no abstracts met the qualifications to be considered as a finalist for **Rhonda's Award 2026**. The next round of available funding will be announced in January, 2026.

MOCC continues outreach to members of Congress in hopes of restoring funding for ovarian cancer research and support for clinical trials that were cut from NIH, NSF, DoD, and more. This effort remains ongoing.

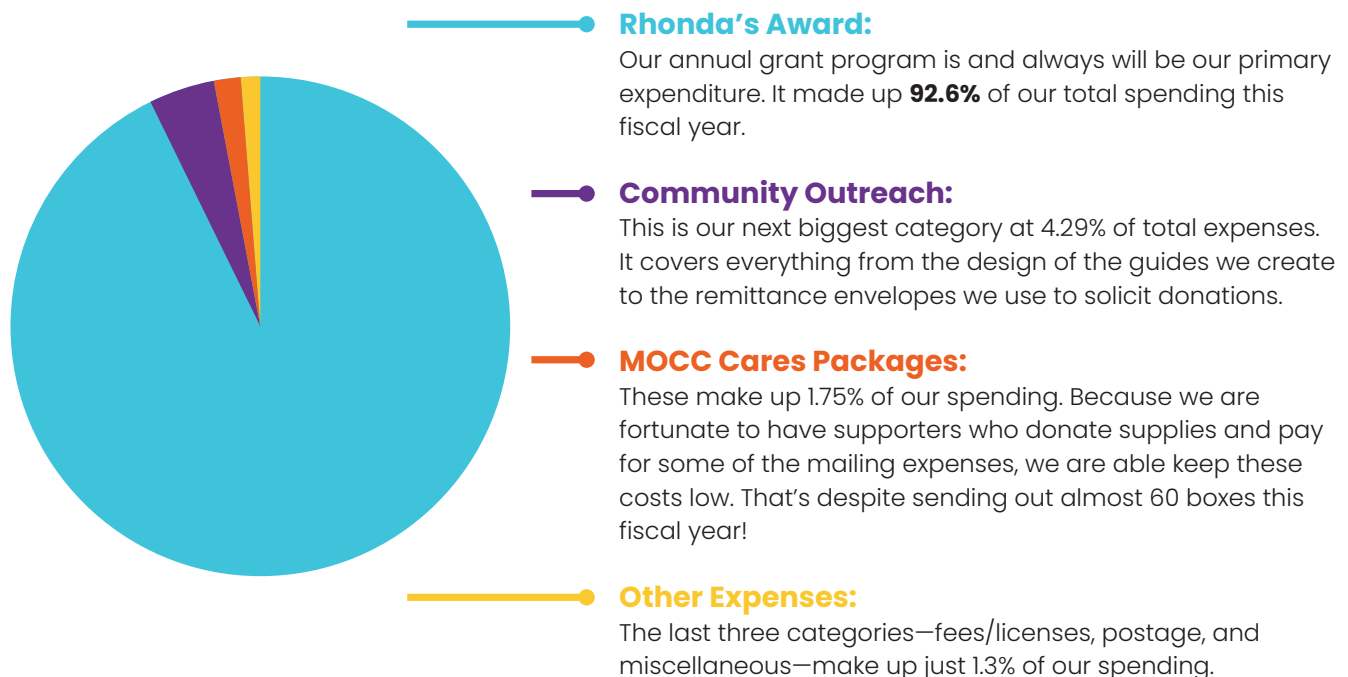


# WHERE YOUR DONATIONS GO

We know it can be tough these days to put your trust in an organization. That's why we take the extra step of creating **The Power of Hope** impact report and posting it to our website each year. It's not a regulatory requirement, like our annual filings are, but we do it because we believe in transparency. And because we want you to know that we are good stewards of your contributions and you can feel confident donating to us.

We also hope this information makes it easier for you to see how efficient our organization is. No big salaries or fancy offices. We are 100% volunteer operated. Because volunteers donate their time to assist with everything from writing and editing our publications to updating our website, we are able to keep our expenses low. (One member of our board of directors even pays the costs associated with hosting our website!)

## HERE'S HOW IT ALL BREAKS DOWN:



# THANKING OUR DONORS

We appreciate financial gifts of all sizes, big or small. They help us continue to grow and meet our mission. We'd like to thank each person, organization, and business who supported us this year, and every year since our launch.

## *The Sapphire Society*

A 2023 addition to our donor giving program was The Sapphire Society. It's so named because sapphire is the birthstone of our late founder, Rhonda. This category is for cumulative giving by individuals. It comprises people who have given a total of \$5,000 or more since MOCC was founded in September 2020.

### **We extend our sincerest gratitude to the members of The Sapphire Society:**

- Ron (1942 – 2023) and Jackie Couch
- Danielle Duke\*
- Shelley Laurell
- Scott and Michelle Schwartz
- Thom and Bonnie DeLange
- Dick (1940–2025) and Sharon Laurell
- Rick and Kathy Mroz
- Jennifer Wilkins\*

## *Individual Donors*

The following sections highlight individuals who donated to MOCC between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025. We send our appreciation to each of them for these gifts.

### **\$1,000+ DONORS**

- Joe and Jamie Butz
- Danielle Duke\*
- Sharon Laurell
- Victoria Liguori
- Jennifer Wilkins\*
- Jackie Couch
- Amanda Laughlin\*\*
- Shelley Laurell
- Scott and Michelle Schwartz



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## \$500-\$999 DONORS

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- Rod Cantrell
- Rick and Kathy Mroz
- Doug Manore
- Lisa Peters

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## \$250 - \$499 DONORS

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- Matt Amico and Lynne Johnson
- Thom and Bonnie DeLange
- Gary and Sheryl Hatfield
- Patrick and Thelma Platz
- Alysha Swisher\*
- Luke and Lori Baldwin
- Rudolph and Cindy Dorman
- Shirly Mulinix and family
- Susan Shinoda
- George and Cindy Wells

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## \$100 - \$249 DONORS

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- Bruce & Amy Bis
- Dave and Diana Deutsch
- Lisa Feinstein
- Steve and Mary Lajti
- Marilyn Marok
- Tim and Terri VanBrandt
- Daniel Brenneman
- Jerry Dunne
- Leanne Goodin
- Jennifer Lockwood
- Earl and Mary Beth Parmelee

***\*Includes a donation of professional services***

***\*\*Gift through the Washington Ovarian Cancer 5K***

# THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 WASHINGTON OVARIAN CANCER 5K RUN SPONSORS



MOCC would like to acknowledge Flying Pig Provisions and Atlantic Gastroenterology for their support in making our first annual 5K run in September such a success.





# THE HISTORY OF

## *The Rhonda's Award*



In the midst of a busy, happy life, Rhonda went for a seemingly routine physical. One she was faithful about having each and every year, complete with blood work and all the recommended preventative screenings. Within just a few hours of completing her blood work, Rhonda received a call informing her that there was a serious problem.

One test led to another as potential causes were eliminated. When ovarian cancer was initially ruled out, Rhonda and her family breathed a sigh of relief. The disease had claimed her maternal grandmother's life. Within 48 hours, however, Rhonda would learn that was a mistake. She did, in fact, have ovarian cancer.

Rhonda was diagnosed with mucinous ovarian cancer, which typically affects women at a younger age than other forms of ovarian cancer. Despite doing every test her doctor recommended each year, the disease had gone undetected and was at an advanced stage.



After several biopsies and an unsuccessful surgical intervention, followed by a life-threatening infection, Rhonda's prognosis was grim. Her loved ones searched tirelessly to find ongoing research or a clinical trial that might offer hope. But few alternatives were available for treating this rare form of ovarian cancer. It was the desire to fund research that would lead to more treatment options—and, eventually, a cure for this disease—that gave rise to ***Rhonda's Award***.

And, in less than five years, the ***Rhonda's Award*** grant program has funded \$100,000 in research. Let's take a look at the difference it is making around the world.



# FUNDING RESEARCH ON A GLOBAL SCALE

From Australia to Boston and on down to Houston, **Rhonda's Award** recipients are global leaders in ovarian cancer research. And we're happy to introduce you to the 2025 winner, Dr. Anil Sood of the MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Dr. Sood's proposal, **Mapping the Molecular Landscape of Mucinous Ovarian Cancer. Unveiling Tumor-Stroma Dynamics**, is a two-year project that will conclude in December 2026. His work will explore how the cross talk between tumor and stroma compartments drives the aggressive behavior of mucinous ovarian cancer.

Watch the MOCC Facebook page for updates throughout the year!  
@MucinousOvarianCancerCoalition

## RHONDA'S AWARD Recipients



**Dr. Kylie Gorringer**  
Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre



**Dr. Elizabeth Stover**  
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute



**Dr. Anil K. Sood**  
MD Anderson Cancer Center

**Rhonda's Award** is the annual grant program of the Mucinous Ovarian Cancer Coalition. It is dedicated to funding research on this rare disease.



Visit [Hope4MOC.org](https://Hope4MOC.org) to learn more





## MOCC Board of Directors

- Shelley Laurell, President
- Bonnie DeLange, Secretary
- Michelle Schwartz, Treasurer
- Jennifer Wilkins, Member-at-Large

## Digital and Media Volunteers

- Alysha Swisher, Media Relations/Promotions
- Danielle Duke, Website

## Advisor to the Board

- Sharon Laurell

## *In Memoriam*

*Rhonda Couch*

Founder, 1964 – 2020



***“THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SOULS ARE THE ONES WHO WALK OUT OF THE FIRE AND THEN RETURN WITH WATER FOR THE ONES WHO ARE STILL IN IT.”***



We feel this way about our 2025 Volunteer of the Year, Amanda Laughlin. She's a survivor of mucinous ovarian cancer who is now helping to raise funds for research. Amanda also advocates for ovarian cancer research awareness at the national level.

Thank you, Amanda, for your commitment to moving research forward.

# MOCC PHYSICIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

When it comes to expertise and experience with mucinous ovarian cancer, our Physician Advisory Committee represents the best of the best. Each member donates their time and talent to help us succeed. They are a great source of pride to MOCC.

While they are available to us whenever we need a question answered or a contact for a woman struggling to find a GYN oncologist, their main role is helping us with Rhonda's Award. Each spring, they review the abstracts we receive and recommend which researchers should be invited to submit a full proposal. Then they thoughtfully review each proposal to determine which one has the greatest potential for impacting early detection, improving treatment outcomes, or leading to a cure.



**Aaron Shafer, M.D., FACOG, FACS**

MD Anderson Cancer Center



**Katherine Kurnit, MD, MPH**

The University of Chicago Medicine



**Jennifer Mueller, MD, FACOG**

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center



## *In Memoriam:*

### **Dr. Michael Frumovitz**

Dr. Michael Frumovitz was a founding advisor for MOCC. He served as the Chair of the Physician Advisory Committee from our launch in September of 2020 until July of 2024. His friendship and guidance were immeasurable. He is greatly missed.





## MOCC MISSION AND GOALS

As a nonprofit organization, we strive to be good stewards of the time and resources entrusted to us. A 100% volunteer agency, we are committed to our mission and to meeting and exceeding our goals.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Mucinous Ovarian Cancer Coalition (MOCC) is a 501(c)(3) organization. We seek to improve the quality of life for and survival rates of women diagnosed with a rare form of ovarian cancer called mucinous adenocarcinoma of the ovary, also known as mucinous ovarian cancer (MOC).

## COALITION GOALS

***Founded in 2020, the organization has three goals:***

- 1** Provide financial assistance to researchers investigating MOC and other potentially linked diseases.
- 2** Build and continuously update an online resource center that connects women and their families with information and experts in this type of gynecological cancer.
- 3** Provide emotional and financial support to women undergoing treatment for mucinous ovarian cancer. Assisting women struggling with household tasks and daily living expenses, as well as those whose spirit may need a boost.



# THANK YOU TO OUR MOCC CARES PACKAGES DONORS

- Lori Baldwin
- Bonnie DeLange
- Shelley Laurell
- Jamie Butz
- Dawn DuPree
- Kathy Mroz
- Amy Bis
- Sharon Laurell

Team MOCC would also like to thank Akiko Tamano for once again donating her time and professional skills to edit The Power of Hope!

## *Contributions in Honor and Memory*

### In Honor and Memory of Rhonda Couch on Her Birthday

- Darlene Abbey
- Matt Amico and Lynne Johnson
- Joe and Jamie Butz
- Jackie Couch
- Leanne Goodin
- Steve and Mary Lajti
- Dick and Sharon Laurell
- Shelley Laurell
- Marilyn Marok
- Lisa Peters
- Diana VanWinkle
- Joy Wilkins
- Jules Wilkins

### In Memory of Ronald L. Couch

- Shelley Laurell

### In Honor of Shirley Mulinix

- Pam Kleinhans
- Shelley Laurell
- Sharon Laurell

### In Honor and Memory of Kate Kaplan

- Lisa Feinstein
- Cooper City High School Water Polo Team

### In Memory of Shannon Senyko

- Earl and Mary Beth Parmelee
- Brad and Jenny Valley



## In Memory of Richard Laurell

- Darlene Abbey
- Luke and Lori Baldwin
- Bedford Ladies Circle Club
- Matt and Barb Bieber
- Bruce and Amy Bis
- Tony Brescol and Lisa Janos
- Kathy Burke
- Charlie and Jenny Butz
- Jackie Couch
- Thom and Bonnie DeLange
- Rudolph and Cindy Dorman
- Jerry Dunne
- Ann Ellis and family
- Jason and Renee Fettig
- Jeannette Forrester
- Gary and Sheryl Hatfield
- Pat Jacobs
- Steve and Mary Lajti
- Mary Beth Lutton
- Mark Masserant
- Bruce and Carol Miller
- Shirley, Mark, and Dave Mulinix
- Trevor Myers
- Judy Nieman
- Linda Olrich
- Lloyd and Barb Pant
- Patrick and Thelma Platz
- Dick and Pam Pohl
- Barb Tipping
- Tim and Terri VanBrandt
- Kenny and Debbie Vaughn
- Louise Wilkins
- Michael Wilkins and friends
- Ed Zukowski

## In Memory of Johnna Bainter

- Dave and Diana Deutsch
- Pete and Nita Fauth
- Kathy Hack
- Jennifer Kellogg
- Mary Severson
- Stephanie Teta
- Bailee Wallace

## In Memory of Michael Frumovitz, MD

- Dick and Sharon Laurell
- Shelley Laurell
- Susan Shinoda

## In Memory of Tina Manore

- Doug Manore
- Paige Zilke
- Jessica Zilke

## *In Memoriam:* **Richard Laurell**



MOCC said goodbye in March to one of our earliest and most ardent supporters. Richard Laurell was known as “Pops” to our cofounders, Rhonda and Shelley. Pops came into their lives as the sisters were just starting elementary school. He was devoted to them and they to him. Pops is greatly missed.



## *Let's Keep in Touch*



**FIND US ONLINE:**  
[www.hope4MOC.org](http://www.hope4MOC.org)



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[Hope4MOC@gmail.com](mailto:Hope4MOC@gmail.com)



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