

Kay Yow Fund gives Tulane Cancer Center a \$100k boost

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The [Kay Yow Cancer Fund](#) has awarded Tulane Cancer Center with a \$100,000 grant for research in lung cancer genetics.



At a news conference on Wednesday (Feb. 27), researcher Victoria Belancio, left, and Prescott Deininger, director of the Tulane Cancer Center, thank the Kay Yow Cancer Fund for awarding a grant of \$100,000 for research in lung cancer genetics. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

The award, given in partnership with the Women's Basketball Coaches Association and The V Foundation for Cancer Research, was presented Wednesday (Feb. 27) during a news conference announcing events planned for the 2013 NCAA Women's Final Four that will be held April 7 and 9 in New Orleans.

The grant funds research into the impact of mobile elements on genetic instability in lung cancer that is being conducted by [Victoria Belancio](#), an assistant professor of structural and cellular biology.

“Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in women, and we are pleased to support Dr. Belancio and her research team's efforts,” said Susan Donohoe, Kay Yow

executive director. “We are also proud to continue to uphold Kay's wishes of making an impact at the site of the NCAA Women's Final Four each year. Research programs such as this one are critical in order to find a cure.”

Belancio is investigating genetic instability in lung cancer via the mobile element LINE1 (L1). Mobile elements are segments of DNA that can jump within a cell's genome, reshuffling genetic material as it copies and reinserts itself. Belancio likened the genetic havoc L1 wreaks to throwing dozens of muddy basketballs onto a clean court.

“L1 bouncing around our genome interferes with the normal function of the genome, therefore causing mutations that can lead to cancer,” she said.

Prescott Deininger, director of the [Tulane Cancer Center](#), said the project builds on prior L1 discoveries originally made at Tulane. “This is a truly groundbreaking new project that has tremendous potential to open major new research avenues for Dr. Belancio and other teams at Tulane,” he said.

Kay Yow, a celebrated head women's basketball coach at North Carolina State University, died in 2009 after a 22-year battle against breast cancer. Her fund is dedicated to raising money for scientific research in the fight against women's cancers.