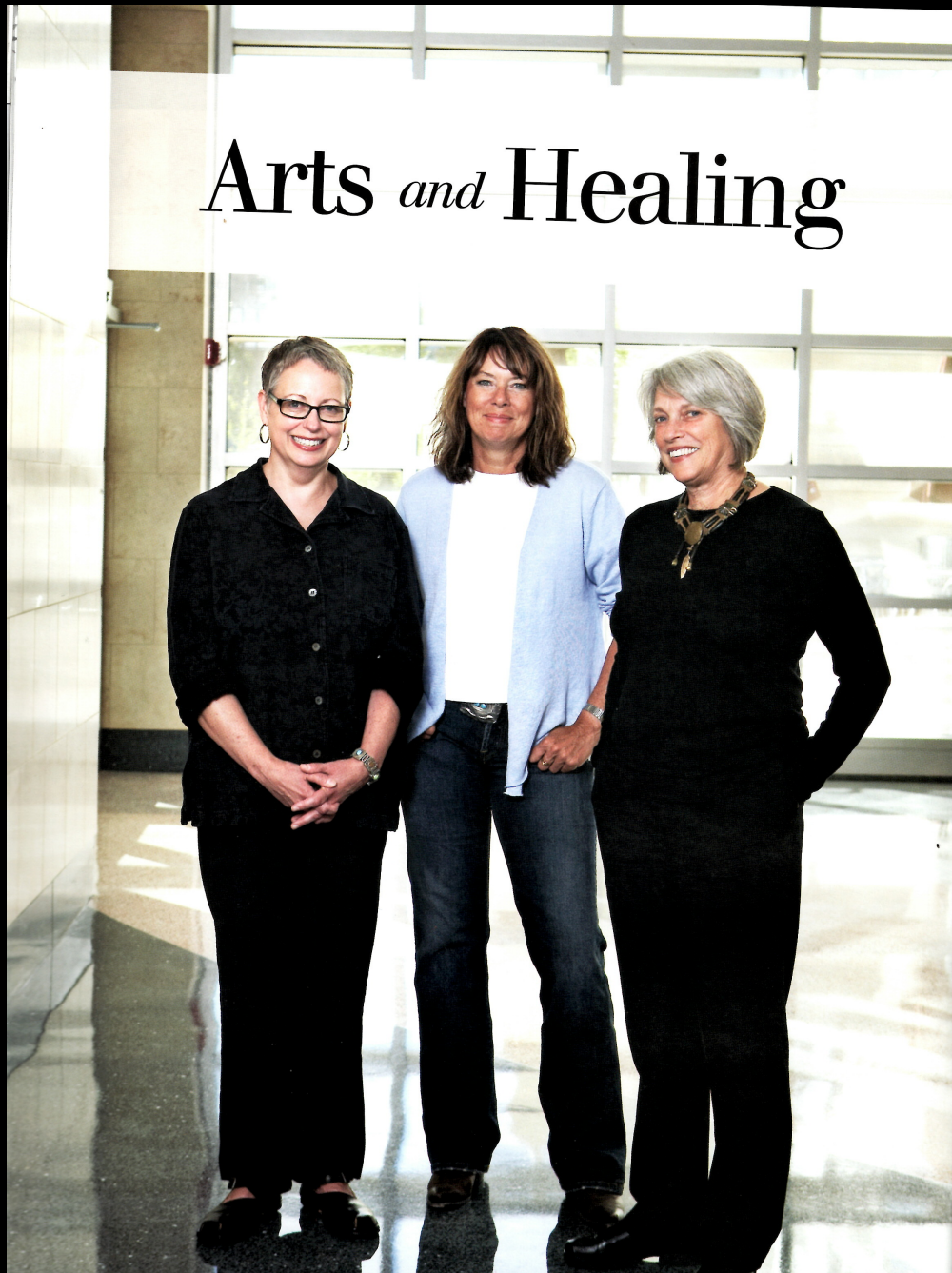


Arts *and* Healing



Three Women Intersect at the Crossroads of Healthcare and the Arts

“It’s not what you look at, it’s what you see.” —Thoreau

They hail from Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee. All are artists showing current work at the Bruno David Gallery on Washington Avenue in St. Louis. And each has a connection to Barnes-Jewish Hospital.

Sarah Colby is the new arts and healthcare coordinator for the hospital. Joan Hall was treated successfully at the Siteman Cancer Center, and is working on a commissioned piece for the new Barnes-Jewish College of Nursing. Bunny Burson and her husband, Charles, made a gift to support arts and healthcare at Barnes-Jewish.

It is now widely recognized that the arts have a profound impact on health and healing. Art can enhance the hospital environment with offerings of beauty, spirituality,

humor and celebration. The mission of the Arts and Healthcare Program at Barnes-Jewish Hospital is to foster a community culture that includes the arts as an integral aspect of the healing environment for patients, families and caregivers.

Hospital president Andy Ziskind, MD, sees the arts and healthcare program as another crucial way to link the national ranking of the hospital with its emphasis on personal and compassionate care. “Organizations like the Society for Arts in Healthcare have been conducting research on the beneficial effects of the arts in healthcare facilities,” notes Ziskind. “It’s one more component to providing a healing environment for the people we serve.”

Sarah Colby Joan Hall Bunny Burson



"The essence of all beautiful art,
of all great art, is gratitude."

—Friedrich Nietzsche

Joan Hall: *The Survivor*

When you look at Joan Hall's art, you discover who she is. Through nets and knots, Joan Hall is a sailor. Images of plants and water and floating, and—look closer. What is that?!

"Oh, those are my cancer cells," she smiles. Joan Hall is a cancer survivor.

Lean and energetic, Hall exudes health and vitality. Whether walking her Bouvier named Schooner, swimming, sailing her boat or teaching students at Washington University, she is constantly moving and animated. It's hard to believe that two summers ago she spent three months undergoing 39 radiation treatments and six weeks of chemotherapy.

Hall's work can be found in prestigious art collections worldwide, including the St. Louis Art Museum, the

Brooklyn Museum of Art in New York, the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University and the Leopold-Hoesch Museum in Duren, Germany. She is the recipient of two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, and was the first female named professor at Washington University's School of Art.

In May of 2005, Hall was preparing for a trip to Australia and made visits to her physicians in preparation. "I've always been very good about staying healthy and staying up on my routine care and travel needs," says Joan. "I guess I had been noticing a pulling sensation, not really a pain, in my groin for a while. But knowing me, I thought I had maybe pulled a muscle."

One of her physicians ordered a scan, and that was when a cancerous lump the size of a grape was found attached to her pelvis. "I had some abnormal cells in the 1980s after a routine test, and had a cervical cone—always a clean bill of health after," says Joan, "but this must have been a dormant cell, an outlaw."

Her summer plans changed immediately, and instead of going to Australia, she came to the Siteman Cancer Center and Barnes-Jewish Hospital through her physicians at the Washington University School of Medicine. For the first time in her life, she created no art for three months. "My total focus was on treatment," says Joan. "My routine that summer consisted of chemo in the morning—hauling my headphones, laptop and cooler; going home to take a nap; driving to the pool to swim; then going home to take another nap." She went from being *"a person who absolutely hates needles and shots to learning how to tolerate a lot more than I thought I could."* She remembers boasting to another artist of her four new tattoos, the four blue dots for targeting her treatment, her "new compass."

Hall describes herself as extremely independent, and it was no different when it came to her choices about her own care and recovery. When her physician said one of the side effects from the radiation might include permanent damage to her left leg, Hall decided to swim every day. "I made sure my doctor knew," she smiles. "In my

own mind, if I could keep the blood flowing, eat good food and stay optimistic, it would work."

She is also not one for secrets, and willingly shares her stories and advice. *"I admired my doctors and nurses, but they got used to me speaking up," Joan says. "I would tell anyone in a similar situation to take charge of their care. I admire women like Sheryl Crow and Hoda Kotbe who are telling their stories—it makes us all stronger."*

Hall finds her art has changed after her recovery from cancer. Her recent show was full of images relating the damage in nature to cancerous cells. She believes art and life are intertwined. "I started using a scalpel and would cut images out for hours—kind of a metaphor when I think back on it, cutting that cancer out, a way of taking control. My art reflects the ocean and things washing up, things deteriorating or things getting caught in nets, and then my cancer cells and altered proteins and images of aquatic plants from early 1800s illustrations." The images mutate and shift as she navigates her way through the making of the work.

Hall has been commissioned to create a new work for the Barnes-Jewish College of Nursing, to be unveiled at the new building dedication on April 4, 2008. Her research took her to the rare books library at Washington University, where she discovered the Badianus Manuscript, an Aztec medical text of healing plants from 1552. *"I was fascinated at how stylized and almost abstract these images were," she says, "and thought about how the past informs the present, and the recent interest in herbal medicine and its effects."* Hall found it perfect imagery to use in the commission piece and the donor signs and wall.

Joan also donated the design of the donor signs and donor wall to the College of Nursing campaign (see more information, page 11) and when asked why, she said, *"I've had a good life, I am thankful. I've always burned the candle 100 percent on both ends, and I intend to continue until I'm off the planet!"*

