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Patient's wife drives myeloma awareness

SCOTTSDALE

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Glendale woman starts cancer network, enlists help of television actor

By Jeffrey Javier

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

A Glendale resident running a cancer-awareness organization out of her home is working to enlist broader local support and expand the statewide effort.

Relying on years of social-work and volunteer experience, Barbara Kavanagh, 68, founded the Arizona Myeloma Network in 2004 for her husband Jack, 71.

Jack Kavanagh was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a cancer of the **GLENDALE** bone marrow plasma cells, 17 years ago.

Kavanagh said she is looking for more permanent volunteers to help the organization.

The network is a non-profit organization that serves as a gateway for cancer patients to learn more about myeloma and find better treatment through conferences held each year.

"I want to demystify treatment and research and define what cancer is and tell people that it is treatable," Kavanagh said.

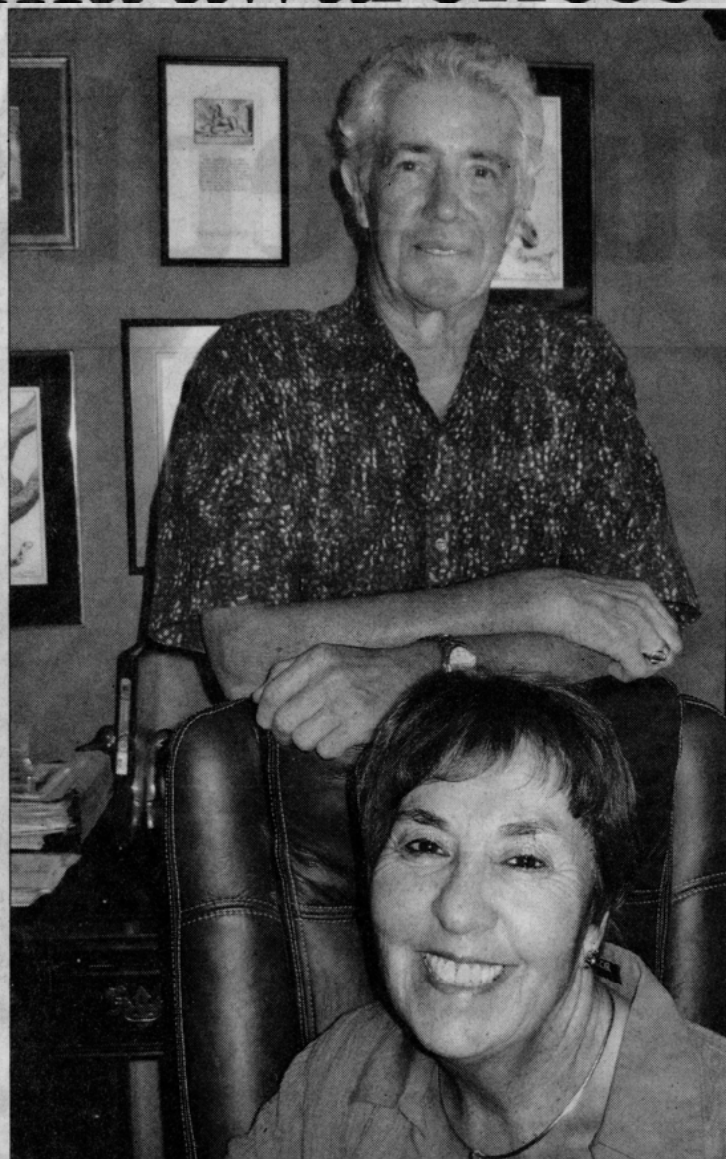
Working out of a spare bedroom of her Glendale home, Kavanagh has planned conferences and golf tournaments and sought grants and sponsors for her organization.

She also has enlisted the help of actor Ray Romano from the TV show *Everybody Loves Raymond*. Romano, the network's honorary chairman, donated tickets to his comedy show in Las Vegas to get raffled off in the annual charity golf tournament.

"I do this full time," Kavanagh said. "I balance the important work I do and the needs of a cancer patient."

Since 2004, the network has held two conferences on living with myeloma, organized three charity golf tournaments and started the Tissue Donor Awareness Project.

A fourth charity golf tournament will be held Nov. 7 at the Orange Tree Golf Resort in



JEFFREY JAVIER/THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Jack Kavanagh is a myeloma patient, and his wife, Barbara, is the founder and president of the Arizona Myeloma Network.

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Barbara Kavanagh
Founder of the
Arizona Myeloma Network

Scottsdale.

The donor-awareness project is a new program that brings together the Translational Genomics Research Institute, a non-profit group that works on early cancer diagnosis and better treatment, and four major hospitals in Arizona to

encourage tissue donation for cancer research.

Kavanagh also has held myeloma and tissue-donation workshops in Prescott and Tucson.

Jack Kavanagh said he supports his wife's endeavors to help cancer patients and their families cope with the stress and pain.

"She does something that no one else does, and that's focusing on the patients," he said.

More than 19,900 new cases of myeloma are expected to be diagnosed this year in the U.S., according to the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation.

For volunteer and donation information, call 623-388-6837 or visit www.azmyelomanet.org.