

Hamilton Jordan fought to battle cancer for all Georgians

Hamilton Jordan said the three most feared words in the English language are "You Have Cancer."



A political advisor, entrepreneur, and investor, he battled six different cancers including non-Hodgkins lymphoma, melanoma/skin cancer, and prostate cancer. He was the most dedicated and dogged cancer fighter I have ever known. He battled royally against his own cancer choosing aggressive cancer treatment and participating in NCI clinical trials. But he also fought on behalf of the whole nation. He has served on the board of the Lance Armstrong Foundation since its inception. He was a Board Member who won the Public Service Award from the American Association of Cancer Researchers Foundation. He won the James Ewing Public Service Award from the Society of Oncology, an Honorary Ph.D. from the Medical College of Georgia and was Honorary Publisher of Cancer and You. He worked doggedly at the policy level to improve cancer care in this country.

In 1999, Hamilton Jordan saw a tremendous opportunity to do something about cancer in Georgia. With Dr. Michael Johns, then head of the Woodruff Health Sciences Center, he presented a concept on "Georgia's Cancer Initiative" to then-Gov. Roy Barnes. That presentation drew exceptional support and ultimately, a pledge of \$400 million in tobacco settlement funds over 10 years to launch a concerted effort to take Georgia "from worst to first" in cancer control. That initiative gave birth to the Georgia Cancer Coalition.

The Coalition was charged with taking that funding and leveraging it into a total resource commitment of a billion dollars. When Gov. Sonny Perdue took office in 2003, he pledged to continue support of the Georgia Cancer Coalition.

For that wisdom and the insight, Hamilton Jordan is credited as the Founder of the Georgia Cancer Coalition; the inspiration behind the mission to move Georgia from the bottom ranks of cancer care to the top echelon with a ten-year strategic plan.

He had a perfect blend of idealism and pragmatism -- convinced that we could defeat the demon, but with the most logical and practical steps with realistic strategies and tactics.

At the individual level, he counseled hundreds of newly diagnosed patients, sharing his inspirational book *No Such Thing as a Bad Day*, and encouraging people to take charge of their own care. With his wife, Dorothy, they founded Georgia's Camp Sunshine which now serves 500 children with cancer year-round

He never gave up. Just weeks ago, he was planning to arrange a meeting for me with the Lance Armstrong Foundation to strategize on a bold new initiative to pump up the cancer battle in Georgia.

Speaking to the media and community leaders at the Atlanta Press Club in March, he bemoaned the decrease nationally in cancer research funding. He credited his survival in part to his ability to be involved in clinical trials and to have access to quality care providers. He wanted all citizens of the state of Georgia to have those same opportunities.

Hamilton Jordan fought to the bitter end on the national level and on his own personal cancer journey. He is a role model for us all. The Georgia Cancer Coalition is proud to be one of his many legacies.

William J. Todd
President and CEO
Georgia Cancer Coalition