

A Dream, Finally Realized

The dedication of Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Center for The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis at UHealth/Jackson Memorial on March 25 celebrated the realization of a long-standing dream. It marked the culmination of 40 years of planning, philanthropy, and a transformative partnership between The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and Jackson Health System.

Since 1985, The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis has been conducting innovative research and clinical trials designed to improve the lives of people with spinal cord and brain injuries and disorders. Simultaneously, at Jackson and UHealth Tower, patients with these injuries and disorders have been cared for by multidisciplinary UM specialists in emergency departments, neurological intensive care units, and the Ryder Trauma Center.



Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Center for The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis at UHealth/Jackson Memorial



Through the vision of philanthropist Christine E. Lynn, these related efforts now live together under one roof at the Lynn Rehabilitation Center, one of the most advanced rehabilitation hospitals in the United States that is transforming the lives of neurologically compromised patients. The eight-story, 80-bed acute rehabilitation hospital not only provides inpatient and outpatient services for acutely injured adults and children, but also serves as the clinical base for The Miami Project and the world-class research teams at UHealth – University of Miami Health System.

“Even before today, as a longtime supporter of UM and The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, Christine Lynn has left an indelible mark on our University and within our community,” said Julio Frenk, president of the University of Miami. “The Lynn name is synonymous with medical care and education throughout South Florida. We are so very appreciative of her remarkable support.”

“We knew this project was going to raise the standard for care – not just in South Florida, but across the country and around the world,” added Carlos A. Migoya, CEO of Jackson Health System. “Thanks to Christine Lynn, the University of Miami, The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, and the taxpayers of Miami-Dade County, we opened a facility that finally gave our top-quality therapists, doctors, and nurses the resources that matched their clinical skills.”

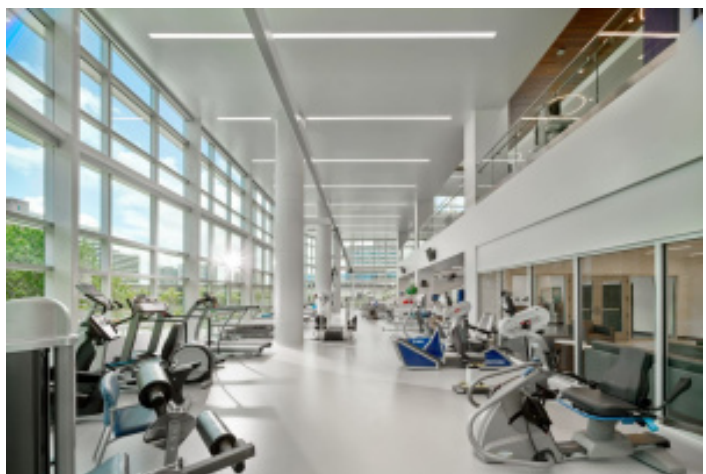
World-Class Center and Amenities

Since opening in March 2020, Lynn Rehabilitation Center has already treated more than 3,300 patients. The gleaming, 250,000-square-foot structure features world-class amenities and the most advanced equipment, from the latest



rehabilitation technology to services focused on reintegrating patients into their families, workplaces, and communities. The Lynn Rehabilitation Center's primary patient care focus relates to individuals with central nervous system injuries and disorders. Additionally, outpatient services are available for people who need ongoing treatments for the same issues, providing a unique continuum of short- and long-term programs.

"When I arrived in 1975 at the UM/Jackson Memorial/VA medical complex as a young neurosurgeon, I was brimming with energy and excitement over the countless opportunities for this amazing mix of institutions and health care professionals to create a world-class center for the treatment of patients with catastrophic neurological injuries and diseases," said Barth A. Green, M.D., chair of The Miami Project and the Ralph C. Wilson Chair in Neurosurgery. "Lynn Rehabilitation Center not only represents a new beacon of hope for these patients and their families, but most important, it is a unique facility where cutting-edge scientific and engineering knowledge is being translated into clinical care in real time to the direct benefit of even the most complex and compromised patients."



The gleaming 250,000-square-foot structure features world-class

amenities and the most advanced equipment, rehabilitation technology, and services.

The vision behind Lynn Rehabilitation Center dates to 1985 and the fateful college football game during which Marc Buoniconti, son of former Miami Dolphins linebacker Nick Buoniconti, severely injured his spinal cord, leaving him a quadriplegic and confined to a wheelchair. Later that year, the Buoniconti family and Dr. Green co-founded The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis. Marc Buoniconti was named and remains president of The Miami Project and The Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis, which was founded in 1992 to create an ongoing source of funding to support the Miami Project mission. Nick Buoniconti, a successful business leader, accomplished attorney and celebrated sports commentator, left all his titles and career opportunities, and committed his entire life to his son with a promise to achieve a cure for paralysis.

Following Nick's death in 2019, it was no surprise that Marc rose to assume his father's leadership role. Today, the efforts of Nick Buoniconti, Dr. Green, and The Miami Project team members have created a world-acclaimed neuroscience center under the direction of Dr. W. Dalton Dietrich, Ph.D., scientific director of The Miami Project and the Kinetic Concepts Distinguished Chair in Neurosurgery, and Marc Buoniconti. This center leverages the extraordinary talent of more than 200 faculty and staff to drive a multidisciplinary program conducting cutting-edge discovery, translational, and neuroscience research.



'A Visionary Interest'

“In my life, I had the privilege of knowing some of the most generous and loving people, but there is one individual I have known and admired for more than 25 years – that is Christine E. Lynn,” said Buoniconti. “Christine is a woman who makes miracles happen for so many and who takes so little credit for all the good deeds she performs. Christine took a visionary interest in The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis; she answers the call whenever she is asked.”

A registered nurse, Christine E. Lynn has dedicated her entire life to improving the health, education, and welfare of people in South Florida and around the world. She has been a long-time supporter of the University of Miami and Miller School of Medicine, especially through her generosity to The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis. Over the years, Lynn has contributed more than \$39 million, making her the largest individual donor in The Miami Project/The Buoniconti Fund’s history. Lynn’s generosity to UM has totaled more than \$41 million.

In 1999, Lynn and her late husband, Eugene, provided a gift to build the lobby at the Lois Pope LIFE Center, then home to The Miami Project, and in 2003 she endowed the Christine E. Lynn Distinguished Chair in honor of Dr. Green. That same year, she established the Christine E. Lynn Distinguished Chair in Orthopaedic Trauma in honor of Gregory Zych, D.O., through a gift to the Miami Center for Orthopaedic Research and Education (CORE). She continued her philanthropy through an additional distinguished chair in neuroscience in honor of Mary Bartlett Bunge, Ph.D. All told, Lynn donated \$25 million toward the building of the rehabilitation hospital that bears



her name.

“Thanks to the generosity of Christine Lynn, the foresight of Dr. Barth Green, and Marc Buoniconti, we now have a facility that allows us to care for patients through their full recovery cycle,” said David R. Gater, Jr., M.D., Ph.D., M.S., chair of the Miller School’s Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, chief of physical medicine and rehabilitation at the University of Miami/Jackson Health System, and medical director of the Lynn Rehabilitation Center. “We can serve those on the inpatient side through the care continuum into the outpatient setting and ultimately back into the community, where we are able to help them reintegrate and become productive members.”



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Philanthropy Has Advanced Vital Care

The Lynn name appears on buildings and institutions throughout South Florida – from Lynn University in Boca Raton to the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing at Florida Atlantic University, and many more.

“I am grateful and humbled to be able to help in constructing this life-changing facility to benefit the thousands of patients with spinal cord injury who will be able to recover using the most cutting-edge technology known to medicine,” said Lynn. “I was extremely impressed by the dedication of the research and rehabilitation staff working tirelessly to serve their patients. We are one significant step closer to fulfilling our collective dream of finding a cure for paralysis.”

“Thanks to the generosity of philanthropists like Christine Lynn, we have achieved one of our most important long-term goals by merging our clinical and research expertise into a single, state-of-the-art rehabilitation facility,” said Dr. Dietrich. “This wonderful new resource tremendously helps our efforts toward earlier interventions with our state-of-the-art technologies to benefit recently injured and newly compromised patients during their subacute neurorehabilitation care. The prospects of enhancing the lives of millions of people worldwide affected by spinal cord and brain injuries and other disorders have been brightened.”

For information on supporting Lynn Rehabilitation Center, call Flavia Llizo at 305-585-4483 or email flavia.llizo@jhfmiami.org.

Bob Woods also contributed to this story.



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