Local Philanthropist bestows MAJOR gift to new center

“My family and I are delighted and proud to continue our support of the UH Cancer Center. Our gift underscores our belief in the importance of cancer research and is a testament to our hope that the Center will have a positive impact on our state for many years to come.” – Joanna Lau Sullivan

Philanthropist Joanna Lau Sullivan has made a $3 million pledge to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center to help build and maintain its new state-of-the-art research building scheduled to open in early 2013.

In recognition of her generosity, the Center will name its new conference area the Sullivan Conference Center. Earlier this year, Mrs. Sullivan made a major gift to the Cancer Center that was combined with a gift from her late husband, Maurice J. "Sully" Sullivan.

Joanna Sullivan has been a major benefactor to many of the state's nonprofit organizations. Her numerous commitments led to her recognition as the prestigious winner of the 2008 Outstanding Philanthropist Award by the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

"Joanna has made an extraordinary impact on our state through her philanthropy," said UH Manoa Chancellor Virginia Hinshaw. "Her support of the UH Cancer Center will provide our leading scientists with the environment they need to be successful in their research efforts to prevent and treat cancer and to serve our community.'

Joanna Sullivan's husband, Sully, was a successful entrepreneur who founded the Foodland grocery store chain with Joanna and her family in 1948. A prominent community leader, he recognized the importance of the University of Hawaii and supported a range of its programs. He also served as a UH Foundation trustee from 1978 to 1984.

The Sullivans have been major previous donors to the Cancer Center, establishing a chair to provide leadership for research. “Few have done as much as the Sullivan Family to improve cancer research and treatment here in Hawaii,” said Dr. Michele Carbone, UH Cancer Center Director. “Naming our new conference center after them will be a fitting tribute to their unflagging support. Their legacy inspires us to find better ways to beat cancer, while knowing that they are with us every step of the way.”

The desire to make a positive difference in the world is a trait Joanna shares with her family, including children Kitty Sullivan Wo, Jenai Sullivan Wall, Colleen Sullivan and Patrick Sullivan.