

# Banner Health, Mayo Clinic receive grant to identify early Parkinson's patients

**By David Lozano**  
Special to the Independent

Researchers from Mayo Clinic Arizona and Banner Sun Health Research Institute are working together on a diagnostic test to identify early Parkinson's disease in patients thanks to a \$152,486 grant from The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research.

Currently, there is no accurate diagnostic test for early Parkinson's disease. The researchers believe that a procedure termed transcutaneous submandibular gland biopsy may prove to provide the needed accuracy. The test involves inserting a needle into the submandibular gland, located under the jaw, and then withdrawing the needle to obtain the core of gland tissue within. The researchers will look for a protein in the cells from patients who have early Parkinson's disease and compare this to subjects without the disease. The researchers have previously found the protein in subjects with advanced Parkinson's disease (more than 5 years) and now are studying people with early Parkinson's (less than 5 years).

All subjects who participate in this study must first have a neurological research exam visit at Mayo Clinic Arizona by Charles Adler, MD PhD, professor of neurology and principal investigator of the study. They will then undergo a radioactive scan that detects brain signs of the disease followed by the submandibular gland biopsy. The biopsy is an outpatient procedure done in the office at Mayo Clinic. The biopsy tissue will then be tested for the Parkinson's disease protein at Banner Sun Health Research Institute by Thomas Beach, MD, PhD, the co-principal investigator of the study. The study requires

that participants be 18 to 85 years old and have Parkinson's disease for less than five years.

"We're hoping our biopsy will be 80 to 90-percent accurate in these early-stage patients, just like it was for the later-stage patients," said Thomas Beach, MD, PhD, who is the senior scientist and director of the Civin Lab for Neuropathology at Banner Sun Health Research Institute. "This study is critical because we can then try to stop it (Par-

kinson's) in its early stage." The procedure may also be useful in guiding the selection of patients for experimental therapies.

"There is currently no diagnostic test for Parkinson's disease," said study principal investigator Charles Adler, MD, PhD. "We have previously shown in some patients with advanced Parkinson's, as well as in autopsies of Parkinson's patients, that the abnormal proteins associated with Parkinson's are consistently found in the submandibular sa-

liva glands, found under the lower jaw. Getting a diagnosis in living patients will be a step forward in our effort to understand the disease better and to develop ways to better treat patients."

Visit [www.bannershri.org](http://www.bannershri.org) and [www.bannerhealth.com](http://www.bannerhealth.com).

*Editor's Note: David Lozano is a public relations specialist at Banner Health.*

# SHRI founder hails Sun Citians

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The Banner Sun Health Research Institute celebrates its 25th anniversary on Wednesday. This is the first in a series of stories focusing on its work and accomplishments.

**NORA AVERY-PAGE**  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

When Dr. Joe Rogers started the Banner Sun Health Research Institute in 1986, he worked out of an abandoned office building, with the ceiling practically crumbling around him.

But now, with the institute's 25th anniversary around the corner next week, Rogers can sit in his office overlooking the Banner Boswell Medical Center campus, thankful for what the generosity of the surrounding

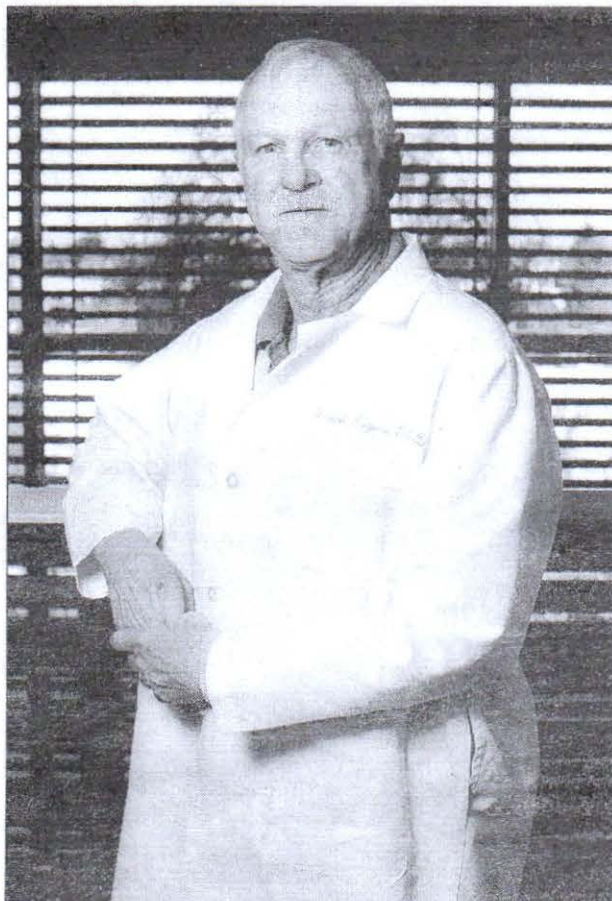
community has helped build.

"I think over the years I've spoken with every civic organization in Sun City," Rogers said. "They have been unbelievably generous."

Rogers, the president and senior scientist of BSHRI, said the research institute was started with the vision that research was a critical part of health care.

"There was absolutely nothing here," Rogers said of the institute's early years.

But thanks to donations from community members, like Sun Citian Gloria Dansereau, BSHRI has grown to a research powerhouse situated in a three-building complex west of the Banner Boswell Medical Center, with



DAVE MARTINEZ/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Dr. JoE Rogers is the founding doctor of the Banner Sun Health Research Institute.

a variety of doctors studying healthy aging and diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and cardiovascular.

Dansereau and her husband decided to leave a legacy donation for the hospital and re-

SEE BSHRI, A5

## BSHRI

### FROM A1

search institute after they moved to Sun City from Minnesota in 1997.

"It would be our hospital, and I felt that the work they were doing at the Research Institute was impressive," Dansereau said.

She was impressed with the Alzheimer's research, which Rogers spearheaded, but the number of studies has expanded since.

"It strikes me that we are very fortunate to have a facility like a Banner Boswell hospital and the Research Institute," Dansereau said of the community benefit. "We're very blessed."

She continues to make donations to the hospital and research institute, saying she likes to support the various events that come up, and stay involved. Dansereau has been a volunteer at the hospital for 11 years in one of the surgery waiting rooms, giving patients family and friends what comfort she can.

Besides having a hospital so close by, Dansereau is happy to have the research institute practically in her backyard, and it's a great advantage for Sun City, she said.

"I think it certainly adds prestige," Dansereau said of BSHRI. "They are renowned all over. Its really something we should be proud of."

To Rogers, that community attachment to the facility is what makes it the perfect location.

The brain donation program through the institute, with a bank that is one of the largest in the country, has been a key to its success by providing researchers in Sun City and around the world with brain tissue to aid in the search for the cause and cure of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases; Rogers said that about 2 percent of the research-minded Sun City population is enrolled in the program.

"I think the community has enlightened self-interest," Rogers said, explaining that when it comes to age-related research, Sun City

### If You Go

The Banner Sun Health Research Institute will celebrate its 25th anniversary from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Wednesday at 10515 W. Santa Fe in Sun City, featuring interactive, educational tours and presentations of the facility open to all members of the community.

offers both potential subjects and people invested in the research itself and what it could mean for them. "In some sense I think it's also a broader generosity to help all humankind."

The population, Rogers said, is one of the main reasons he came here to do his research — a case of 'if the mountain won't come to Muhammad, Muhammad must go to the mountain,' he explained, since the patients are here in Sun City.

That synergy between the community and research isn't lost on Dansereau.

"They have a good place to draw from," Dansereau said with a laugh, since Sun City has no shortage of patients.

Rogers, who is internationally recognized for his pioneering research on the damage inflammation causes to brain tissue and how that impacts Alzheimer's disease, said when pharmaceutical companies are testing new drugs for age-related diseases, Sun City is the first place they come.

"That is perhaps my contribution, recognizing how perfect this population is for studying age related disorders," Rogers said.

He will be leaving BSHRI for a position at Stanford Research International after the institute's anniversary. There, he will continue his age-related research. He feels comfortable leaving, knowing other doctors will be able to maintain and expand the organization he helped build.

He will also be working together with BSHRI on some of the research, particularly the Alzheimer's studies by Dr. Marwan Sabbagh.

"I won't be gone entirely," Rogers said.

# Sun City health-research institute

## Public can help celebrate March 7 during open house

By Lesley Wright  
The Republic | azcentral.com

The Banner Sun Health Research Institute is known to scientists around the world for its brain-tissue bank as well as research to treat Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, heart problems and other issues involved with aging.

The institute will celebrate its 25th birthday in March, and the scientists and administrators who work there want it to be just as well-known to residents who live in the Valley. The institute will open to the public March 7.

Work being done at the non-profit institute may help stop the progression of Alzheimer's disease or regrow damaged heart tissue within a matter of a few years. Visitors who stop by for the anniversary may even decide to leave their brains to the institute for research.

"What I think you'll see as a biomedical innovation coming forth will be to take Alzheimer's disease from a terminal disease to a chronic disease like diabetes," said Marwan Sabbagh, a neurologist who directs the Banner Sun Health Research Institute. "I think that will occur in the next 25 years and the institute will be at the forefront of that work."

### A pioneering history

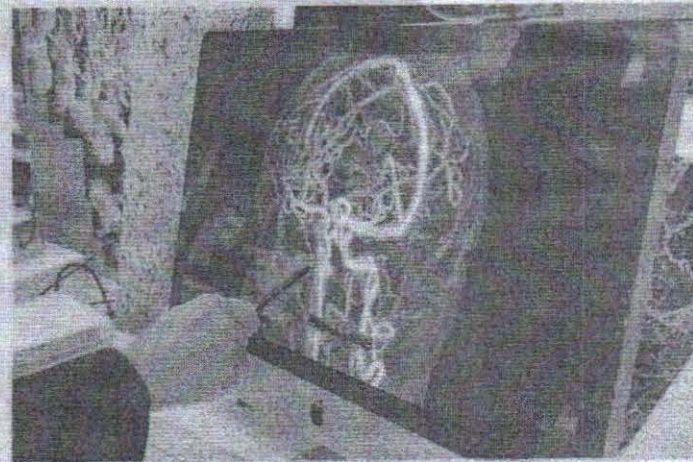
Dr. Joseph Rogers founded the institute in 1986, figuring that Sun City would be a perfect location for a research center focused on diseases of aging.

Rogers was engaged in groundbreaking research into Alzheimer's and was the first scientist to propose using anti-inflammatory drugs to treat the disease. He and other scientists at the institute were "pioneers in the field," Sabbagh said.

The Northwest Valley is home to more than 75,000 residents older than 65. Many of them volunteer, and others donate funds, which are becoming more necessary as government grants are cut back.

Even as grant funding becomes more competitive, the ranks of people with Alzheimer's disease keeps growing, Sabbagh said.

When Sabbagh came to the institute in 2000, the campus was half the size it is



Rohrer shows a brain scan. The center has a team on call 24 hours a day to retrieve donor bodies less than three hours after death.

today. A new research building opened in 2007, and Sabbagh now directs the clinical research enterprise he helped found.

This program takes the knowledge developed from research done in the institute's 10 laboratories and applies it to drugs and other forms of treatment.

### Innovations in heart care

More than 100 institute researchers work on a range of issues, but the center's premier reputation comes from innovations in diagnosing and treating Alz-

heimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, cancer and heart problems.

Sabbagh is excited in particular about milestones reached recently in research having to do with cardiovascular stem cells.

Scientists have been able to extract stem cells from heart biopsies and then put these stem cells back into the patient. Eventually, a heart patient may be able to avoid having surgery altogether. Instead, stem cells would be injected that would allow new, healthy heart tissue to grow back.

Sabbagh has seen other research lead

Jesse Hunter (left) and Dr. Alex Roher view a scan of a brain at the Banner Sun Health Research Institute in Sun City. The institute has become renowned as a center for brain-tissue research over the past 25 years.

PHOTOS BY CARLOS CHAVEZ/THE REPUBLIC

## 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

**Where:** The Banner Sun Health Research Institute, 10515 W. Santa Fe Drive, Sun City.

**What:** The free 25th anniversary celebration will include a tribute to founder Joseph Rogers, lunch and tours and presentations at the institute.

**When:** 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 7.

**Details:** Participants must reserve a space. Call 602-230-2273.

to new diagnostic agents for Alzheimer's disease that will be on the market soon.

"It's a very exciting place to be," he said.

### Thousands give bodies, brains

Brian Browne, the institute's marketing director, likes to boast that he has 2,000 donors lined up for the center's brain research.

Since "fresh" brain tissue is vital to research, the donor program has a response team that is on call 24 hours to retrieve bodies less than three hours after death.

Many donors prefer donating their bodies to the institute since, frequently, only the brain is removed and the body can be sent back to the family promptly for a funeral.

The institute's doctors treat the donors for years, allowing them to send vital information to researchers who request material from the tissue bank. The center receives more than 200 requests a year from labs around the world.

Visitors who help celebrate the anniversary on March 7 will be able to meet the scientists conducting the latest research and tour the labs to see how the work is done.

**Hats Off To ...**

**Freeman provides walking history**

*As Sun Citians approach volunteerism for the 2010 Sun City 50th Anniversary celebration, volunteers take their cue from the serious time and effort that past volunteers have given towards the success of previous anniversary celebrations. Volunteers of the 50th and prior efforts will be saluted in this monthly column.*

**By Marilyn Holley and Darrell Bradshaw**

The Hats Off salute this month honors a very special volunteer who has devoted countless hours to become the walking, talking encyclopedia of Sun City - Jane J. Freeman.

Through her efforts, along with co-author Glenn Sanberg, the history of the first 25 years of Sun City came to life for the community's 25th Anniversary celebration. The book, entitled "Jubilee - A History of Sun City," takes the reader from the desert that was to become Sun City and moves forward with recordings of who did what, when it happened and how it happened. She devoted a year and a half of her life to the research, typing and finalizing of this historical book so that future Sun Citians would know, understand and appreciate the beginnings of their community. Ms. Freeman seemed destined for a life of giving to others as she sought a college degree in education. At the University of Virginia she completed her doctorate degree in education, Ed.D., and moved to New York State where she met her future husband, Leslie. She held the position of Dean of Students at Rockland Community College in Suffern, N.Y. They were married on Dec. 20, 1958. She has two step children, Toni and Les, Jr. Both children are now retired. Toni lives in New York state and Les, Jr. in Montana.

When Mr. Freeman retired in 1970 the Freeman's moved from New York state to "get away from the cold and ice." They purchased a golf course home on Prairie Hills Circle and settled in to an active retirement lifestyle. She fondly remembers the security they felt

even more involved in the community. She has repeatedly been recognized for her dedication to the community and her giving spirit. She was recognized for over 25 years of service to Meals on Wheels. She received Interfaith's Minnie Harlow Humanitarian Award in 2003. In 2005, she received Emeritus status from Sun Health for 15 years of service. In 2007, she was recognized by the Valley of the Sun United Way for her community involvement.



In addition to awards, Ms. Freeman has also served, in various positions, for many Sun City organizations. She is the former First Vice President of the Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc. She served many years on the Sun City Library Board of Directors and is past President. She is the past President of both the Sun City Community Fund/United Way and of the Sun Health Foundation Board of Trustees. And she is the former Board Chairman of the Sun Health Extended Care Services.

Ms. Freeman holds Emeritus status with the Sun Cities Historical Society. The Society began in part when Ms. Freeman and other concerned residents learned that the Del Webb Corporation office was contemplating discarding unwanted files and documents once the build out of Sun City was completed. These pieces of history were rescued and gave birth to the Historical Society for the preservation they deserved.

The above lists just a few of Ms. Freeman's volunteer achievements. She has served in over 25 significant positions during her Sun City residency. Her numerous efforts were rewarded in 1981 when she was awarded Woman of the Year by the Daily News-Sun.

When asked about how the writing of the history of Sun City came about, Ms. Freeman laughs

man with the Northwest Valley Paper Council (sponsored by the Independent and Daily News-Sun newspapers) where local issues and events were discussed. From these beginnings she and co-author Glenn Sanberg collaborated to give the Sun City community an official history book. For those interested, this book is available at the Sun City Historical Society, 10801 W. Oakmont Drive, Sun City.

Ms. Freeman also used her research and writing skills to co-author a 25 year history of Boswell Hospital. In response to a question regarding why she volunteered to be so involved in the community Ms. Freeman jokingly responded "because she was asked to and it sure beat doing housework", but follows that closely with the statement that it is because of the wonderful people she has met through volunteerism. She is the definition of a "people person".

Though small in stature, Jane J. Freeman has an enormous giving heart and the community of Sun City has truly benefited from her tireless efforts and generous commitment to volunteerism.



Submitted photo

**Jane Freeman**

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