



## PAYING IT *FORWARD*

**T**hree men had separate paths until one fateful event joined them together – cancer. Tom Jordan, Floyd Hamilton and John Fulton were strangers when they were diagnosed with throat cancer, but their faith and their desire to reach out to others brought them together to form a strong bond of friendship. They also made the choice to be treated at the Riverview Cancer Center. Without this one choice their lives would be very different.

Tom, 56, was the first to be diagnosed in May of 2005. As he set on this course, he was full of fear and confusion but he knew he was in the right place when he chose Riverview. “The people at the Riverview Cancer Center are amazing and I think the world of Dr. Dugan and all of the staff,” said Tom.

His fight began with a couple weeks of chemotherapy after a visit to Dr. Ruemu Birhiray, an oncologist at Riverview. Then he moved on to radiation therapy. Tom was the first patient at

Riverview Cancer Center to receive treatment on the new linear accelerator equipped with Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy. “IMRT is the most sophisticated radiation treatment in the world for many cancers,” said Thomas C. Dugan, MD, a board certified radiation oncologist who treated Tom, John and Floyd. “We are able to precisely place beams of radiation to treat areas that once would have been considered too risky.”

Tom had told the staff that he would be happy to talk to or pray with any patients who needed support. “Even though you don’t have the same kind of cancer, you have something in common,” explained Tom.

Tom was soon connected with a patient who was receiving treatment for throat cancer who was seeking support – this person was John Fulton, 43. John’s treatments began on the last day of Tom’s treatments in June of 2005.

“I am blessed for the experience,” said John. “Anything that brought me closer to God is not a



*Pictured: [LEFT TO RIGHT] Tom Jordan, Floyd Hamilton and John Fulton*

bad thing, but I would not wish the experience on anyone. Cancer is just a horrible disease.” Through John’s experience with treatments and Tom’s reaching out, he also decided to reach out to other cancer patients who needed prayer and encouragement. Tom and John were fortunate to connect with another patient receiving treatment for throat cancer – Floyd Hamilton, 47, who was diagnosed in September 2006.

“Regardless of what stage you are at in your cancer, we all need hope. Our attitudes while going through this have been the difference,” explained Floyd. “When I speak with people I want to do what Tom and John did for me, which was to inspire me and give me hope and to help make the experience better.”

“Cancer has allowed me to develop friendships and pull together as survivors,” Tom said. “I am so blessed to have these guys as my best friends.”

All are blessed to be cancer free and are thankful for their doctors and the staff at the Riverview Cancer Center.

**Tell your physician if you have one or more of the following signs and symptoms of throat cancer:**

- » A cough
- » Changes in your voice, such as hoarseness
- » Difficulty swallowing
- » Ear pain
- » A lump or sore that doesn’t heal
- » A sore throat
- » Weight loss