



Senator James E. "Jim" King, Jr.

District 8

IN MEMORIAM

October 30, 1939-July 26, 2009



Honoring the Memory of Senator Jim King

On July 26th, the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program lost a close friend—no, a member of its family. Among Senator James E. "Jim" King's many accomplishments as a long-time and esteemed member of Florida's legislature, his support for Florida's biomedical research enterprise is what many consider his most valuable contribution to the citizens of Florida.

In the late 1980s as a member of the House of Representatives, King took a keen interest in health care issues and passed Florida's "Death with Dignity" law. In 1999 as a freshman senator, King introduced Senate Bill 2558 that led to the creation of the Florida Biomedical Research Program, the state's first major investment in accelerating progress towards preventing, diagnosing, treating, and curing tobacco-related disease. The Program received financial support through the Lawton Chiles Endowment Fund, established with the 1997 Florida tobacco settlement agreement, and annual appropriations of millions. A few years later, in part as a result of his continued support for the growth of the program, the Senate renamed it the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program in honor of his parents, both victims of cancer.

When Jim King became Senate President in 2004, he authorized an Interim Report on State Funded Medical Research. This report concluded that "there was no central entity in Florida that coordinated medical research", and "if the Legislature desired to coordinate research efforts, eliminate duplication and share research results among interested parties, a process or entity should be established to do so." During the 2004 regular session, the Florida Center for Universal Research to Eradicate Disease (FL CURED) was born.

As the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program became an increasingly important factor in biomedical research in the State of Florida, Senator King remained one of the Program's most ardent champions. His leadership undoubtedly contributed to a snowball effect for increased state support of biomedical research and biotechnology culminating with the 2009 passage of the tobacco surcharge, which resulted in up to \$50 million dollars in support to be shared equally between the King Program and the Bankhead-Coley Cancer Program. The latter was created in 2006 to advance progress towards cures for cancer.

By 2008, research produced by King grantees had already brought an additional \$90.4 million in external funding to Florida. More than 180 scientists at 15 different institutions throughout the state have led projects to date, adding significantly to the body of knowledge surrounding

tobacco-related diseases, advancements which otherwise may not have occurred. Program-sponsored research has resulted in the formation of at least five thriving new Florida businesses and led to more business partnerships and spillovers from university research to private sector research and development.

King's support for research was so singular; Gov. Charlie Crist recognized it when remembering King's life: "Jim leaves a great legacy of service—including his significant efforts to promote biomedical research to find cures for the horrible diseases that bring suffering to so many Floridians."

Dr. Richard Bookman, Chair of the Florida Biomedical Research Advisory Council, recounts Senator King's contributions to the Program: "Senator King provided visionary leadership to support the growth of biomedical research in Florida. He saw so clearly that the search for cures was a triple benefit: a beacon of hope for those afflicted, an investment in human capital advancing our understanding, and a bet on Florida's role as a leader in our nation. We will all miss his warmth and his passionate and outspoken support for doing the right thing."

King's leadership and vision will be long-remembered in the Florida biomedical research and healthcare community.

To read more about Senator King, see http://www.jacksonville.com/news/metro/2009-07-26/story/state_sen_jim_king_dies_after_battle_with_pancreatic_cancer