

Andy Semesco was like any other third-year college student

- studying, planning and dreaming about his future. An exceptionally healthy young man, he was also athletic and vigorous, so when a mild sore throat began to bother him, he initially dismissed it as early semester stress. However, the sore throat didn't go away, and was soon accompanied by a lump on the side of his neck. Andy's father, a dentist, decided to seek the advice of an oral surgeon. The



family was stunned to learn that Andy Semesco - young, vibrant and full of hope - had oral squamous cell carcinoma at the base of the tongue. Over the next five months he battled for his life with courage and optimism, committed to the valiant perspective that perhaps his struggle could one day save someone else. On April 1, 1999, Andy passed away. He was just 21 years old. He left this earth with all of his family and friends by his side.

Andy Semesco fit no known risk profile for head and neck cancer. He didn't smoke. He didn't use snuff or chewing tobacco. He didn't abuse alcohol. He fell into an ever-widening category of head and neck cancer patients who don't have "typical" risk factors, but are diagnosed with cancer of the mouth, throat, thyroid, tonsil, tongue or other areas of the head and neck. These cancers are aggressive, often metastasizing quickly. If a patient survives treatment, they must be monitored the rest of their lives for recurrence, which tragically is all too common.

THE ANDREW J. SEMESCO FOUNDATION is the fulfillment of a promise to Andy by his eight closest friends and his family that no stone would be left unturned to help prevent this disease from affecting other people. The Foundation is committed to raising funds for research into identifying the causes, the potential treatments, and perhaps one day, a cure for head and neck cancers. Over the past decade, the Andrew J. Semesco Foundation, Inc. has donated nearly \$400,000 to current Oral, Head and Neck Cancer research. The University of Florida is proud to partner with the Andrew J. Semesco Foundation in the race to find a cure.



Andy Semesco, third from left, with his family: brother David, mother Peggy, and father Steve.



High school graduation brought together the friends who would later organize the Andrew J. Semesco Foundation. Back row, l to r: Todd Murphy, David DeGroot, Matt McCoun, and Mack Perry. Front row, l to r: Ryan Anderson, Andy Semesco and David Young.



Andy (at right) and Jeff Fleigel. Jeff is chairman of the Andrew J. Semesco Foundation Board of Directors.

RESEARCH
is our
greatest
weapon.

Fighting to prevent,
treat, and one day
eliminate head and
neck cancers



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*In the fight to prevent, treat,
and one day eliminate head
and neck cancers, research
is critical to progress.*

More than 45,000 cases of head and neck cancer were diagnosed in the United States last year, and the incidence of this devastating cancer is on the rise. While some risk factors for head and neck cancer are known, there is still considerable mystery surrounding the cause of many cases. Research – especially multi-disciplinary investigation within academic medicine – offers the most substantive hope for discovering and developing better treatments and potential cures.

The University of Florida is engaged in research that is focused on the prevention and treatment of head and neck cancer. UF's specialists not only treat hundreds of patients, but also bring together the best minds in medicine, genetics, dentistry, pharmacology and other health sciences to search for answers to this catastrophic disease. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and ask humbly for your support.



The work of the University of Florida, like many other academic centers, is enhanced tremendously by private philanthropy. Without a sturdy financial bridge to independent research, scientists and physicians are less able to push the limits, and take the risks required to achieve modern medical miracles. The research dollars provided by the Andrew J. Semesco Foundation have helped fuel critical collaborative investigational work for head and neck cancer with UF's Colleges of Medicine and Dentistry, and have paved the way for future breakthroughs.

This year alone, the following research is well underway:

- Assessing the impact that hyperbaric oxygen therapy has on the recurrence and survival of patients treated for head and neck cancer.
- Evaluating emerging technology that provides high resolution three-dimensional optical images of tissue for the detection of precancerous and early cancerous lesions of the mouth, throat, and voicebox.
- Studying the long term success of a surgical technique known as neck dissection.
- Evaluating the role of certain viruses in the development of head and neck cancer and the effectiveness of virus screening clinics.
- Finding ways to tag cancer cells through DNA research.

However, while our greatest strengths are the extraordinary scientists, educators, and clinicians at the University of Florida, our weakest link is the limited resources available to identify, refine and deliver breakthrough discoveries that will one day mean a cure.

The University of Florida College of Medicine is supported by gifts of philanthropy through the University of Florida Foundation, which is a Florida registered 501(c)3 foundation. Major gifts such as the endowment of a research fund can be made with cash, appreciated securities, or gifts of real estate. We will aggressively seek other sources of funding from individuals, grateful patients, corporations, foundations, and government funding as this program grows.

UF has a vision for Florida Tomorrow. Florida Tomorrow is a belief that improved treatments for cancer are on the horizon. But this vision comes with the understanding that discoveries take time and funding. We respectfully request that you join us in this vision and await your response with dedication and hope. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information, please contact:
The Office of Development and Alumni Affairs
UF College of Medicine
352-273-7986
www.drgator.ufl.edu



Andrew J. Semesco Fund for Oral, Head, and Neck Cancer Research

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