

Health Care Hero Calls McCormick Ranch

~ HOME ~

By Alison Bailin Batz

McCormick Ranch is a proud home to some of the Valley's top executives, captains of industry and community leaders – even more so this year with the arrival of Dr. Robert Kuske, who moved to the area from Paradise Valley this past Fall.

Recently named a Health Care Leadership Award Winner in the category of Research and Innovation by *Arizona Business Magazine*, Dr. Kuske first moved to the Valley after leading the breast cancer program at the University of Wisconsin as Full Professor of Human Oncology. Before that, he was chairman of Radiation Oncology at the famed Ochsner Clinic in New Orleans, where he was also Chief of Staff over 470 physicians.

Before making his way to Arizona, Dr. Kuske also co-



healthy, normal tissue surrounding the area. Heart and lung exposure to radiation are minimal, in contrast to the six-week external radiation program.

Given the level of success of this treatment option, Dr. Kuske is currently serving as co-principal investigator in the largest breast cancer radiation trial in medical history, squarely focused on breast brachytherapy. This trial, sponsored by the National Cancer Institute, has now completed testing 4,300 women, many right here in Scottsdale. Kuske believes the results, once analyzed and presented, could inspire the biggest paradigm shift in how patients will be treated since Marie Curie herself discovered radium in 1896.

But he doesn't simply stop at research – he believes in action.

As such, this co-founder of Arizona Breast Cancer Specialists – the first and only center in the world dedicated solely

pioneered a breast cancer treatment called brachytherapy, which is a five-day radiation alternative for women with early stage breast cancer.

“The procedure places radiation sources – usually tiny pellets the size of pencil lead, inside and adjacent to a cancer, or inside an area that may contain residual cancer after surgical removal of the visible tumor mass,” says Dr. Kuske, who was also honored in 2012 by the *Phoenix Business Journal* as a Health Care Hero for his dedicated work in the field. “Using brachytherapy, doctors can reduce the radiation exposure to nearby normal tissues that do not need – and can be harmed by – the radiation.”

The beauty of this technique is that it delivers radiation to the 1 to 2 cm (approximately .75”) of breast tissue surrounding the surgical cavity edge, with elegant precision. Since such a small area of breast can be treated, it avoids exposure to

to treating women with breast cancer – recently partnered with Arizona

Center for Cancer Care to move onto the Virginia G. Piper Cancer Center at Scottsdale Healthcare to take on all radiation oncology services provided by the facility – with Dr. Kuske firmly focused on solely assisting women with breast cancer. With extensive upgrades to the facility complete, Dr. Kuske and his team are busily helping women each day at the center. As part of the partnership, Dr. Kuske and the team also performed a similar re-vamping to the Osborn facility, where they are now also seeing patients as well.

“Arizona Breast Cancer Specialists, Arizona Center for Cancer Care and Scottsdale Healthcare – not to mention some amazing other partners – are now fighting this war against breast cancer together, a war we intend to win,” says Dr. Kuske. “From diagnosis to after care, we are a one-stop shop of full-body care for women and their families.” ■