Dear Joe and Mary,

He was the “Rhinestone Cowboy.” He was a musical genius. He was, for many Baby Boomers, that talented country singer who would say to his loyal TV viewers every week, “Hi everybody. I’m Glen Campbell.” But more importantly, he was a hero to a blonde-haired, hazel-eyed little girl named Debby Kay Campbell. Debby is Glen Campbell’s oldest daughter and his most devoted fan. Sadly, Glen passed away in August of 2017 after a grueling 6-year battle with Alzheimer’s disease. Three years after Glen’s passing, Debby still tears up when talking about her ever-so-talented dad. Not only is she passionate about carrying on Glen’s musical legacy, but fiercely resolute about fighting against the disease that relentlessly ravaged the brain of her dad.

“Alzheimer’s is an ugly disease and it does not discriminate. My love for my dad will never disappear. The love I have for him is a feeling that resides in my heart and soul and it can’t be taken away. We have to support and do everything we can to fight this disease.”
–Debby Campbell, Glen Campbell’s daughter

We are excited to share the news that Debby is joining McLaughlin Research Institute as our spokesperson in the fight against the disease that stole her dad, her rock, away from her.

“I am so pleased and honored to have visited and made many friends at McLaughlin Research Institute. Their work is so very important to understanding the many neurological diseases and how to develop and create a path for cures.”
–Debby Campbell

For decades, McLaughlin Research Institute has been at the forefront of brain disease research and is one of the very few institutes in Montana dedicated to basic research aimed at finding treatments, and eventually cures, for neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s disease. In the wake of the Covid-19 crisis, McLaughlin has also partnered with our friends at Montana State University to develop new assays to detect Covid-19 in people with exposure to the virus.

This is an exciting time in research as we look creatively for ways to move forward with our critical mission of delivering the promise of treatment and the hope for cures for those suffering with Alzheimer’s and related dementias. You can play a vital role in helping Debby Campbell and McLaughlin Research Institute continue our groundbreaking work to find hope for those afflicted with devastating brain diseases. (Read more on the reverse side.)

Partner with us today to see a cure tomorrow.

With deepest gratitude,

Michael Kavanaugh, PhD
Professor & Director

Randy Gray
MRI Board of Directors

McLaughlin Research Institute
for Biomedical Sciences

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The faculty and staff at MRI are deeply committed to nurturing and encouraging the next generation of scientists. To that end, MRI has mentored local high school and college students for the past 65 years. This community youth outreach fosters critical thinking, creates camaraderie between students from different schools, and gives future scientists a chance to learn how science is done by working with active scientists. It was a pleasure this year to host four students from Great Falls and the surrounding area. **Joseph Guter** is a 2019 Great Falls High graduate and a sophomore at University of Chicago. **Wyatt Walters** is a 2019 graduate of Central Catholic High and a sophomore at University of Montana. **Renee Wanke** is a 2016 Great Falls High graduate and a 2020 graduate of Washington University, Saint Louis. **Sara Tarum** is a 2018 graduate of Central Catholic High and a junior at University of Providence. Each of these students worked on research projects this past summer and fall. To learn more about Joseph, Wyatt, Renee, and Sara and their projects at the Institute, check out mclaughlinresearch.org/News/2020StudentVolunteers.

MRI recognizes the importance of contributing to the battle against Covid-19. We have teamed up with a Bozeman biotech company, Montana Molecular, to develop a new saliva assay for rapidly detecting antibodies to SARS-CoV2. **Dr. Teresa Gunn** has very recently succeeded in creating new transgenic mice that will be utilized by collaborators at the NIH-Rocky Mountain Labs to study the biology of the virus and to test vaccines. In August of 2020, Montana PBS came to the Institute to do a story on our students and MRI’s SARS-CoV2 work.

MRI has been approached by several pharmaceutical companies and research institutions over the past year to initiate and expand preclinical gene therapy trials of brain disease with transgenic mouse models here at the Institute. These therapies rely on the effectiveness of injecting small pieces of DNA (antisense oligonucleotides or ASOs) into the brain or spinal cord in order to modulate the expression of proteins involved in diseases. Based in large part on studies led by Associate Director **Dr. Deb Cabin**, human clinical trials with ASOs to lower prion protein in the brain are now on the horizon. This represents the exciting prospect of the first effective treatment for devastating neurological diseases like fatal familial insomnia and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. MRI researchers and academic collaborators around the country, from New York to Boston to Bozeman to Missoula to Seattle to San Francisco are working on extending these gene therapy-based approaches to other disorders including Alzheimer’s disease and Huntington’s disease.

**Dr. Miranda Orr**, an up-and-coming superstar in the field of Alzheimer’s research at Wake Forest University and a former graduate student at MRI, is conducting some of her groundbreaking studies at MRI, testing yet a different therapeutic approach for Alzheimer’s disease. **Dr. Mike Kavanaugh** and collaborators at the University of Montana and the Missoula biotech start-up Inimmune are testing other novel strategies to treat this devastating disease using transgenic Alzheimer’s disease mouse models at MRI.

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**OUR MISSION**: To improve human health through innovative genetic research and education.

**We are pleased to announce the first annual Debby Campbell and Friends Fundraising Event for Alzheimer’s Research!**

The night will be filled with fun, laughter, a few tears, and beautiful music, hosted by Debby Campbell, daughter of the late Glen Campbell, country music singer, and Alzheimer’s activist. The tentative date for the event is **July 30, 2021**, but is subject to change due to Covid-19. Learn more about Debby at debbycampbellmusic.com.

Please look for updates on our website at mclaughlinresearch.org, our Facebook Page McLaughlin Research Institute, and our YouTube Channel McLaughlin Research Institute for Biomedical Sciences.