

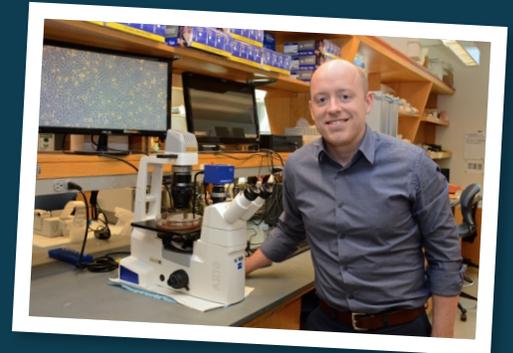
THRIVER Kris Wood, Ph.D.

Research of a rare cancer helped this scientist return to the lab



Dr. Kris Wood is a brilliant scientist impacting lives far beyond his lab. A few years ago, Kris moved to Raleigh, NC from Boston. He was busy getting established and setting up his new lab at Duke University School of Medicine. As a V Scholar, Kris wanted to make a significant impact—his research focused on drug resistance in cancer treatments, a serious hurdle for many patients.

Anxious to get his research rolling, he first ignored the increasing amounts of tightness in his chest and fatigue, thinking it was ordinary stress. Initially, his doctor suggested maybe he was getting sick or reacting to new allergies in the area. But weeks later, he still wasn't feeling better and returned to the doctor, thinking he needed an antibiotic. This time, a chest X-ray showed a mass in his chest; Kris was in denial. Additional tests and a surgical biopsy confirmed he had B-cell lymphoma, a rare blood cancer.



Kris, in his lab, finding new cancer treatments

I was drawn to study cancers that affect large numbers of people, but I have my life to show for the researchers who took the time to study such a rare cancer.

An Impact Greater Than Numbers

As an engineer and a scientist, Kris is an analytical person, relying on data and facts. But this time, it was personal and too scary to look up data. However, instead of feeling panic, he felt strong gratitude for the life he had lived to that point. His doctor showed him a *New England Journal of Medicine* paper that had just been released on B-cell lymphoma. Reassuringly, the study showed high cure rates, which lifted his spirits and enabled him to tackle a combination of chemotherapy and radiation.

Today, Kris runs a large, active lab bustling with talented students solving the problem of drug failure. For this scientist, 100% of research is the nuts and bolts of the disease and how you treat it. However, through his journey, Kris learned treatment goes far beyond the research. Cancer therapies are critical, but the care of friends, family and the medical team are invaluable. Kris not only empowers his students to aggressively explore new treatments, he also encourages them to give patients support and confidence in their care ... something more difficult to quantify, but equally as important.



Kris, his wife and two beautiful daughters

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