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Column: Outrage Over Proposal to Sell Norris Cotton Cancer Center Name

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I am writing to express my profound outrage that Dartmouth College is considering selling the name of the Norris Cotton Cancer Center in an effort to raise capital.

I had the honor and privilege of working for Sen. Cotton in Washington, D.C., during his last term in office, from 1969 to his retirement in 1975. Sen. Cotton was the ranking Republican on the Health, Education and Welfare Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee, through which the senator secured the appropriation for the cancer center, most appropriately named in his honor.

It was also Sen. Cotton who secured the release of cancer center equipment manufactured in Europe and bound for the center when it was held up for delivery.

Sen. Cotton grew up in Warren, and I saw firsthand his advocacy and tireless efforts to secure medical care and treatment for families in rural New Hampshire.

The May 31 *Valley News* article "Cancer Center Naming Rights Part of Fundraising Campaign" quotes Dr. O. Ross McIntyre, who served as the center's director from 1974 to 1992, as saying that most of the senator's friends were politicians. I beg to differ. The senator's friends were the citizens of New Hampshire for whom he spent 28 years in Congress advocating and who elected him to eight terms in Congress. The countless lives and families that he touched during his career in both New Hampshire and beyond are incalculable.

I flew to New Hampshire from Washington, D.C., with Sen. Cotton and Sen. Warren Magnuson, D-Wash., and other staff members for the dedication of the Norris Cotton Cancer Center. Magnuson was the keynote speaker.

As the article correctly points out, the cancer center was Sen. Cotton's proudest accomplishment.

Securing what today is a \$20 million health care appropriation for rural Grafton County was no small feat in 1970, especially for a Republican facing a Senate and House controlled by Democrats. It is a testament to the senator's legislative skill and the regard in which he was held by all of his colleagues, Democrat and Republican alike.

But for Sen. Cotton, the cancer center would not exist. Neither would Dartmouth Medical School (now the Geisel School of Medicine). And while the senator is gone, his memory lives on in the hearts and minds of the untold individuals and families he helped. Cotton's name was not for sale during his life and it should not be for sale in his death.

The senator was a huge baseball fan. The selling of the Norris Cotton Cancer Center name is akin to the Boston Red Sox selling Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees: No good will come of it. As Shakespeare's Iago said in *Othello*: "Who steals my purse steals trash ... But he that filches from me my good name Robs me of that which not enriches him And makes me poor indeed."

It is my sincere hope that the board of trustees of Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and the medical school will reconsider the ill-conceived marketing scheme and not attempt to sell the Norris Cotton Cancer Center name.

Thomas T. Barry, of Concord, is a practicing attorney and a retired circuit court judge. He served as the Washington, D.C., office manager for Sen. Norris Cotton.