Claudia Hardy, a leader in community-based cancer research and cancer prevention at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Comprehensive Cancer Center, is the 2010 recipient of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Life is a Gift Award presented each year by the organization's North Central Alabama affiliate. The award recognizes an individual whose work and attitude reflect gratefulness and appreciation for the subtle and profound gifts of life.

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Hardy is the program director for UAB's Deep South Network for Cancer Control , a National Cancer Institute-funded project focused on training, community-based participatory research, data-gathering and educational outreach in 22 counties of the Alabama Black Belt, the Mississippi Delta and the urban areas of Birmingham and Hattiesburg and Laurel, Miss. She is a noted expert in health-disparities research, minority health outreach, community-prevention programs and minority recruitment in clinical trials.

Deep South Network volunteers now number more than a thousand, and many are called community health advisors trained as research partners (CHARPs). Recently, Hardy helped adapt the network training model so Komen for the Cure could use volunteers to do targeted breast-cancer education programs in medically under-served communities of Alabama.

The Life is a Gift Award honors the legacy of Komen for the Cure volunteers Hope Smith and Kathy Leigh Hancock. Hardy received the award May 6 during the affiliate's annual luncheon in Birmingham.

Launched in 1982, Susan G. Komen for the Cure has become the world's largest grassroots network of breast-cancer survivors and activists funding research that organizers hope lead to new cures. The organization's North Central Alabama affiliate serves 38 counties in the state.

The UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center is among the 40 cancer centers in the nation to meet the stringent criteria for the National Cancer Institute's comprehensive designation. The center is a leader in groundbreaking research, reducing cancer disparities and leading-edge patient care.

*May 17, 2010*