Every day, more than 54 million adults in the United States experience the effects of arthritis, the most debilitating disease in society today. More than 1 million adults in Arizona have arthritis, and nearly half report that it limits their activities, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The University of Arizona Arthritis Center [1] wants a future free of the pain of arthritis, but it will take a team effort.

That’s why the UA Arthritis Center (UACC) is teaming up with the UA Department of Intercollegiate Athletics [2] for the game-changing 2017 University of Arizona Arthritis Center Bear Down Luncheon, to benefit the Center and its research efforts to find a cure for arthritis.

This unique event, sponsored by Desert Diamond Casinos & Entertainment, will be held April 26, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., at Fleming’s Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar, 6360 N. Campbell Ave., Tucson.

Joining UAAC Director C. Kent Kwoh, MD, at the event will be featured speaker Mike Candrea, eight-time NCAA champion and Olympic gold and silver medal winning UA softball coach. One of the most respected coaches in the nation, Coach Candrea’s accomplishments include eight national titles in a 24-season span; 21 trips to the Women’s College World Series in the last 27 seasons; 1,468 career victories; a mind-boggling career winning percentage of 80 percent; 54 All-Americans with a staggering 95 citations; four national players of the year and stewardship of Team USA to an Olympic gold medal.

Coach Candrea will share his interesting background as a baseball player turned softball coach and the path that has led him into one of the longest tenures in the elite ranks of college softball. The Wildcats currently are ranked No. 2 in the nation with a 40-1 record. On April 10, USA Softball announced that Coach Candrea will be inducted into the National Softball Hall of Fame this October.

Since it began in the early 1980s, the UAAC/Arizona Wildcat athletics partnership has raised more than $1.7 million for the UAAC, a leader in the development of some of the first artificial joints as well as state-of-the-art arthritis treatments that have benefited patients in Arizona and nationwide. Current UAAC research includes studies of biomarkers that indicate early stages of osteoarthritis and preventive treatments that can affect its progression; the effects of Valley Fever on patients with rheumatic disease; cartilage regeneration; and the links between gut microbiota (microorganisms in the intestines), the immune system and the development of arthritis.

Tickets to the Bear Down Luncheon are $100 per person ($56 tax-deductible) or $550 for a
table of six ($285 tax-deductible). The Gold Supporter package is $2,500 ($2,235 tax-deductible) and includes six tickets to the luncheon with table signage and podium recognition; the Silver Supporter package is $1,000 ($912 tax-deductible) and includes two tickets plus table signage and podium recognition.

For reservations or more information, please call the UA Arthritis Center, 520-626-3699. The deadline for reservations is April 21.

About the University of Arizona Arthritis Center

The University of Arizona Arthritis Center, a Center of Excellence at the UA College of Medicine ? Tucson, is a research leader with a focus on identifying the causes of arthritis and developing improved diagnosis, measurement and treatment of the disease. For more information: arthritis.arizona.edu [1]

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