MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS
RESEARCH SUMMARY

TOPIC: SAVING MEMORIES: THREE ALZHEIMER'S BREAKTHROUGHS
REPORT: **MB #4974**

BACKGROUND: Experts say that more than 6 million Americans aged 65 and older may have Alzheimer's. Memory problems are usually one of the first signs, although initial symptoms may vary from person to person. A decline in vision/spatial issues, and impaired reasoning or judgment, may also signal early stages of Alzheimer's disease. Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is a condition that can be an early sign, but not everyone with MCI will develop the disease. The time from diagnosis to death varies as little as three or four years if a person is older than 80 when diagnosed, to as long as 10 or more years if a person is younger.
(Source: https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-alzheimers-disease)

STAGES OF ALZHEIMER'S: In the early stage of Alzheimer's, a person may still drive, work and be part of social activities, even though they may be having memory lapses like forgetting familiar words or the location of everyday objects. Middle-stage Alzheimer's is usually the longest stage and can last for many years. During this stage, the person may confuse words, get frustrated or angry, and act in unexpected ways, such as refusing to bathe. Damage to nerve cells in the brain can also make it difficult for the person to express thoughts and perform routine tasks without assistance. In the final stage of the disease, dementia symptoms become severe. Individuals lose the ability to respond to their environment, carry on a conversation, and eventually, to control movement. They may still say words or phrases, but communicating pain becomes difficult. As symptoms get worse, significant personality changes may occur and extensive care needed.
(Source: https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/stages)

PROMISING NEW TEST FOR ALZHEIMER'S: Researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis have shown that levels of a specific protein in the blood rise as amyloid plaques form in the brain. The protein can be detected in the blood of people who have yet to show signs of mild cognitive impairment, making it a promising test to diagnose Alzheimer's before symptoms appear. Randall J. Bateman, MD, the Charles F. and Joanne Knight Distinguished Professor of Neurology, and colleagues are working on this blood test that shows promise at distinguishing people with amyloid in their brains from those without. They realized that a different Alzheimer's protein, called tau, may also be useful for identifying which people have amyloid plaques silently gathering in their brains. "The finding of a unique tau species that is closely linked to changes caused by amyloid plaques will help to identify and predict people who have or will likely develop Alzheimer's disease," said Bateman.
(Source: https://medicine.wustl.edu/news/alzheimers-protein-in-blood-indicates-early-brain-changes/)

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If this story or any other Ivanhoe story has impacted your life or prompted you or someone you know to seek or change treatments, please let us know by contacting Marjorie Bekaert Thomas at mthomas@ivanhoe.com