



## Hope Funds for Cancer Research

Press Release

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### Results of the Hope Funds for Cancer Research Sixth Anniversary Awards of Excellence Gala

**NEWPORT, RI -- July 23, 2012 --** Hope Funds for Cancer Research, an organization dedicated to advancing innovative research for the most difficult-to-treat cancers, today announced its 2012 Award of Excellence Gala held in Newport, RI on Saturday, July 21st at historic Marble House raised more than \$300,000. The Honorary co-chairs for the event were Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Anderson and Drs. George Demetri and Susan Frankl. The event co-chairs were Mr. David Garrett, Ms. Leah Hartman, and Dr. and Mrs. Jonathan Lewis.

Each year, the Hope Funds for Cancer Research holds this Awards Gala to provide support for programmatic activities and to raise funds for postdoctoral fellowships in cancer research. At this event the Hope Funds presents its Awards of Excellence, which recognize outstanding achievements in the fields of basic research, drug development, medicine, patient support and philanthropy.

"It was a wonderful celebration of giants in science and medicine, as well as the Hope Funds Fellows who are the superstars of the future. All who attended shared in the joy of past successes and were inspired by the promise that together we will bring scientific advances to the bedside and improved treatments. By supporting the best young researchers, the Hope Funds for Cancer Research is assuring a bright future for our patients, the best gift of all," stated Dr. Kenneth C. Anderson, Honorary co-chairman of the 2012 Gala.

Honorees presented with the 2012 Hope Funds Award of Excellence at this year's Gala were: Elizabeth Blackburn, Ph.D. and Janet Rowley, M.D., for Basic Science; Joseph Schlessinger, Ph.D. for Clinical Development; and Azra Raza, M.D., for Medicine.

#### About the Honorees

##### *Elizabeth Blackburn, Ph.D.*

Elizabeth Helen Blackburn is an Australian-born American biological researcher at the University of California, San Francisco, who studies the telomere, a structure at the end of chromosomes that protects the chromosome. For this work, she was awarded the 2009 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. Dr. Blackburn earned her B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees from the University of Melbourne in Australia, and her Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge in England. She did her postdoctoral work in Molecular and Cellular Biology at Yale. Dr. Blackburn co-discovered telomerase, the enzyme that replenishes the telomere. In 1978, Dr. Blackburn joined the faculty of the University of California, Berkeley in the Department of Molecular Biology. In 1990, she moved across the San Francisco Bay to the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), where she served as the Department Chairwoman from 1993 to 1999. Dr. Blackburn is currently the Morris Herzstein Professor of Biology and Physiology at UCSF, and a non-resident fellow of the Salk Institute. She is the president-elect of the American Association for Cancer Research. [Click here for more information on Dr. Blackburn](#)

##### *Janet Rowley, M.D.*

Janet Davison Rowley is an American human geneticist and the first scientist to identify a chromosomal translocation as the cause of leukemia and other cancers. In 1998, she was one of three scientists awarded the prestigious Lasker Award for their work on translocation and received the National Medal of Science in 1998. Dr. Rowley is internationally renowned for her studies of chromosome abnormalities in human leukemia and lymphoma, which have led to cures for previously untreatable cancers and the development of targeted therapies such as imatinib (Gleevec) for CML. She developed the use of existing methods of quinacrine fluorescence and Giemsa staining to identify chromosomes, and demonstrated that the abnormal Philadelphia chromosome implicated in certain types of leukemia was involved in a translocation with chromosome 9 in some cases. She also identified translocation between chromosomes 8 and 21 in acute myelogenous leukemia. Dr. Rowley received a bachelor of philosophy degree, bachelor of science degree, and a medical degree all from the University of Chicago. She is the Blum-Riese Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago and has served as the interim deputy dean for science since 2001. In 2009, Dr. Rowley was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States' highest civilian honor, and the Gruber Prize in Genetics. [Click here for more information on Dr. Rowley](#)

*Joseph Schlessinger, Ph.D.*

Joseph Schlessinger is a Croatian-born Israeli biochemist and biophysician. He is chair of the Pharmacology Department at Yale University School of Medicine in New Haven, Connecticut, as well as the founding director of the school's new Cancer Biology Institute. In 1991, Dr. Schlessinger co-founded the biotechnology company SUGEN to develop tyrosine kinases inhibitors for cancer treatment. SUGEN later became part of Pfizer. One of the pipeline products, sunitinib (Sutent) was developed by Pfizer and approved by FDA for treating gastrointestinal stromal tumors and renal cell carcinoma. His area of research is signaling through tyrosine phosphorylation, which is important in many areas of cellular regulation, especially growth control and cancer. Dr. Schlessinger received a B.Sc. degree in Chemistry and Physics in (magna cum laude), and a M.Sc. degree in chemistry (magna cum laude) from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He obtained a Ph.D. degree in biophysics from the Weizmann Institute of Science. He was a postdoctoral fellow in the Departments of Chemistry and Applied Physics at Cornell University, and a visiting fellow in the immunology branch of the National Cancer Institute of NIH. Dr. Schlessinger's work has led to an understanding of the mechanism of transmembrane signaling by receptor tyrosine kinases and how the resulting signals control cell growth and differentiation. [Click here for more information about Dr. Schlessinger](#)

*Azra Raza, M.D.*

Azra Raza is the Director of the MDS Center at Columbia University in New York, NY. Dr. Raza completed her medical education in Pakistan, training in Internal Medicine at the University of Maryland, Franklin Square Hospital and Georgetown/VA Medical Center in Washington, D.C. and her fellowship in Medical Oncology at Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York. Dr. Raza belongs to that rare group of unique investigators who are adept at both basic and clinical research. Her basic research has been strictly therapy-driven and is marked by Dr. Raza's tireless efforts to move the advances in the laboratory to the bedside with alacrity for the improvement of treatment outcome of MDS patients. Dr. Raza is well known internationally for several landmark observations related to the biology and treatment of MDS, which have been published in the peer reviewed journals, The New England Journal of Medicine, Nature, Blood, Cancer, Cancer Research, British Journal of Hematology, and Leukemia, Leukemia Research. [Click here for more information about Dr. Raza](#)

Additional information is available at [Hope Funds 2012 Honorees](#)

**Award of Excellence**

Honorees who receive this award are suggested through a formal nomination process and selected based on their contributions to the field of cancer research and treatment, their integrity and character, and how their peers regard them. Previous recipients of the award are Sir Paul Nurse, Craig Mello, Ph.D., Robert A. Weinberg, Ph.D., James E. Darnell, Jr., M.D., and Joan Massagué, Ph.D. for Basic Science; Antonio J. Grillo-Lopez, M.D., Malcolm A. S. Moore, D.Phil., Brian Druker, M.D., George D. Demetri, M.D., and Kenneth C. Anderson, M.D. for Clinical

Development; M. Judah Folkman, M.D., John Cameron, M.D., Murray Brennan, M.D., and Larry Norton, M.D. for Medicine; Paula Kim, Robert Bazell, Amy Dockser Marcus, Harold Freeman, M.D., and Ellen Stovall for Advocacy; and Corporate Angel Network, Gilda's Club Worldwide, the Virginia and D. K. Ludwig Fund for Cancer Research, David H. Koch, and Donald J. Listwin for Philanthropy.

#### About the Hope Funds for Cancer Research

The Hope Funds for Cancer Research was formed in 2006 to establish a funding vehicle that would take a rational scientific, medical, and investment approach to making grants for the most interesting and promising research efforts to address the most difficult-to-treat cancers, including pancreatic, lung, liver, sarcomas, esophageal, brain, gastric, bone and ovarian cancers, and rare leukemias, lymphomas and MDS. The Trustees of the Hope Funds believe that funding research that could lead to breakthroughs in these areas and increase life expectancy in these types of cancers is at the core of its mission. Hope Funds for Cancer Research is an independent and unaffiliated non-profit organization under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service's code.

For additional information about the organization, please visit [www.hope-funds.org](http://www.hope-funds.org) or call 401-847-3286.

*Advancing innovative research in understudied cancers*

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