



Hope Funds for Cancer Research

Press Release
For Immediate Release
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Hope Funds for Cancer Research Announces 2012 Award of Excellence Recipients

NEWPORT, RI -- September 7, 2011 --The Hope Funds for Cancer Research, dedicated to advancing innovative research for the most difficult-to-treat cancers, today announced its 2012 Award of Excellence honorees in the areas of basic science, clinical development and medicine. These individuals will be recognized at the organization's annual awards dinner on July 21, 2012 in Newport, RI.

The Award of Excellence honors those who have made outstanding contributions to basic, clinical, and medical cancer research or conducted prominent advocacy and philanthropy on behalf of cancer research. This year's honorees for Basic Science are Elizabeth Blackburn, Ph.D. and Janet Rowley, M.D.; for Clinical Development, Joseph Schlessinger, Ph.D; and for Medicine, Azra Raza, M.D.

"These honorees were selected for these awards based on their seminal contributions to cancer research and cancer treatment," stated David Garrett, chair of the Hope Funds Programs Committee.

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. 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 [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 for Medicine; Paula Kim, Robert Bazell, Amy Dockser Marcus, Harold Freeman 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 Listwin for Philanthropy.

The awards will be presented on July 21, 2012, at a white-tie dinner held at Marble House in Newport, RI. The annual dinner is a focal point for the Hope Funds charitable mission and brings

together the organization's supporters and constituencies to recognize and honor distinguished luminaries in oncology. Proceeds from the event will fund postdoctoral fellowships in cancer research. Visit [Upcoming Events](#) for more information.

About the Hope Funds for Cancer Research

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 innovative and promising research efforts to address the most difficult-to-treat cancers, including pancreatic, lung, liver, sarcomas, esophageal, brain, gastric, renal and ovarian cancers, as well as rare leukemias, lymphomas and MDS. These cancers are insidiously aggressive illnesses that kill most of their victims within months, even with aggressive chemotherapy. The Trustees of the Hope Funds for Cancer Research believe that funding young, innovative researchers will lead to breakthroughs in these areas and increase life expectancy for those with these types of cancers. The Hope Funds for Cancer Research is a 509 (a)(1) charity under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service's code.

For additional information about the organization, please visit www.hope-funds.org or call 401-847-3286.

Hope Funds: Advancing innovative research in understudied cancers



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