



Hope Funds for Cancer Research

Press Release
For Immediate Release
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Hope Funds for Cancer Research Eighth Anniversary Awards of Excellence Gala Dinner

NEWPORT, RI -- March 19, 2014 --The Hope Funds for Cancer Research, an organization dedicated to advancing innovative research for the most difficult-to-treat cancers, today announced its 2014 Award of Excellence Gala will be held in New York City on Thursday, April 24th at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Honorary co-chairs for the event are Mrs. Robert Ray Parks and Mrs. & Mrs. William D. Rueckert. The event co-chairs are Dr. & Mrs. Kenneth C. Anderson, Mr. & Mrs. William P. Egan, Mr. & Mrs. Gary Jobson, Dr. & Mrs. Malcolm A.S. Moore, and Prof. Bryan R.G. Williams & Ms. Lynda Power.

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. The event is a formal awards dinner, followed by a dance.

"This event, a white tie dinner set in the shadow of an ancient Egyptian temple will highlight a remarkable group of scientists who are making a radical difference in cancer research. It is truly an extraordinary experience." stated Bill Rueckert, Honorary co-chair of the 2014 Gala.

Honorees being presented with the 2014 Hope Funds Award of Excellence at this year's Gala are: James D. Watson, Ph.D. for Extraordinary Achievement, Tyler Jacks, Ph.D. for Basic Science; Charles L. Sawyers, M.D. for Clinical Development; Daniel D. Von Hoff, M.D. for Medicine, and Jan Vilcek, M.D., Ph.D. for Advocacy.

"With the occasion to celebrate the greatest living scientist of the 20th Century along with this year's Honorees, plus our past Honorees, this will be a gathering of many of the greatest minds in the field of cancer research," stated Malcolm A.S. Moore, DPhil, Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

About the Honorees

James D. Watson, Ph.D.

James Dewey Watson is best known as a co-discoverer of the structure of DNA in 1953 with Francis Crick. He was awarded the 1962 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine along with Crick and Maurice Wilkins, University College London. The publication of the double helix structure of DNA can be regarded as a turning point in science: human understanding of life was fundamentally changed and the modern era of biology began.

Dr. Watson received his B.S. from the University of Chicago and his Ph.D. from Indiana University with Dr. Salvador Luria as his advisor. He did postdoctoral research with the biochemist Dr. Herman Kalckar in Copenhagen. From 1952 to 1956, Dr. Watson worked at the University of Cambridge's Cavendish Laboratory in England, where he first met his future collaborator and

friend Francis Crick. In late February 1953, Watson and Crick deduced the double helix structure of DNA and its alphabet of bases represented by the letters ATGC which spell out the code of life and is always paired in a way to pass on genetic information faithfully with every cell division. Near the end of their paper Watson and Crick concluded, with what is regarded as the most famous understatement in science, "It has not escaped our attention that the specific pairing we have postulated immediately suggests a possible copying mechanism for the genetic material." In fact most scientists regard the elucidation of the double helix as one of the most important research achievements ever, a discovery that will be remembered along with the work of Newton, Darwin and Einstein.

Dr. Watson's illustrious career only began with the double helix. From 1956 to 1976, he was on the faculty of the Harvard University Biology Department, promoting research in molecular biology. From 1968 Dr. Watson served as director of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. At CSHL, he shifted his research emphasis to the study of cancer, along with making CSHL a world leading research center in molecular biology. In 1994, he started as president and served for 10 years. He was then appointed chancellor, serving until 2007, and is currently Chancellor Emeritus. Between 1988 and 1992, Dr. Watson played a leading roll in obtaining public support for the National Institutes of Health, helping to establish the Human Genome Project and he served as the project's first director.

Tyler Jacks, Ph.D.

Tyler Jacks is a Professor of Biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), an Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) investigator, and director of the David H. Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research, which brings together biologists and engineers to improve detection, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer. Dr. Jacks pioneered the use of gene-targeting technology in mice to study cancer-associated genes and to construct mouse models of many human cancer types. His lab studies the genetic events that lead to the development of cancer. The lab focuses on using a series of mouse strains carrying engineered mutations known to be involved in human cancer. Through loss-of-function and gain-of-function mutations in tumor suppressor genes as well as the K-ras oncogene, mouse models of many types of cancer have been constructed, including pancreatic cancer, astrocytoma, endometrioid ovarian cancer, colorectal cancer, sarcoma, retinoblastoma, and tumors of the peripheral nervous system. Dr. Jacks graduated *magna cum laude* with Highest Honors in biology from Harvard University in 1983 and earned a Ph.D. in biochemistry from the University of California, San Francisco in 1988. Dr. Jacks then went on to do postdoctoral research at MIT in the Whitehead Institute in the lab of Robert A. Weinberg. He was named an assistant professor at MIT in 1992 and associate professor with tenure in 1997. In 2000, he was promoted to full professor standing. Tyler Jacks served on the Board of Scientific Advisors of the National Cancer Institute and is a past president of the American Association of Cancer Research. He also sits on the board of directors at Thermo Fisher Scientific, Inc. and Aveo Pharmaceuticals Inc. He is a member of the Scientific Advisory Board at T2Biosystems, Inc. and at Epizyme, Inc. Dr. Jacks was elected to the National Academy of Science in 2009.

Charles L. Sawyers, M.D.

Charles Sawyers is an investigator of the HHMI and a physician-scientist at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. His lab builds on the success of molecularly targeted cancer drugs with a focus on developing a new generation of treatment options for patients. Dr. Sawyers holds the Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis Chair in Human Oncology and Pathogenesis Program. Dr. Sawyers is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2013 Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences and the 2009 Lasker Clinical Award, which recognized him for his part in advancing treatments for chronic myeloid leukemia (CML). He played a key role in the development of imatinib (Gleevec) and dasatinib (Sprycel), two drugs that together have transformed CML from a fatal cancer into one that is nearly always treatable. Imatinib was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration in 2001, and dasatinib was approved in 2006. Using his clinical understanding of treating CML as well his expertise from studying it in the laboratory, Dr. Sawyers helped design the first clinical trial for imatinib, including selecting which patients were most likely to benefit from the drug. Along with Brian J. Druker of Oregon Health and Science University and Moshe Talpaz of The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. His more recent work resulted in

the discovery of the prostate cancer drug enzalutamide that received FDA approval in 2012. Prior to Memorial Sloan-Kettering, Sawyers worked at UCLA's Jonsson Cancer Center for nearly 18 years. He has a Bachelors Degree in history from Princeton University and an M.D. from Johns Hopkins University.

Daniel D. Von Hoff, M.D., F.A.C.P.

Dan Von Hoff, M.D., is a medical oncologist and oncology drug developer. Dr. Von Hoff's major interest is in the development of new anticancer agents. Dr. Von Hoff and his colleagues have conducted early clinical investigations of many new cancer agents including gemcitabine, docetaxel, paclitaxel, topotecan, irinotecan, fludarabine, mitoxantrone, dexrazoxane, nab-paclitaxel, vismodegib, and others. At present, he and his colleagues are concentrating on the development of molecularly targeted therapies for individual patients with cancer. His other major accomplishment is the development of two specific treatments which have improved the survival for patients with advanced pancreatic cancer. Dr. Von Hoff is Physician-in-Chief and Distinguished Professor of the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen); Professor of Medicine at both Mayo Clinic, Scottsdale and the University of Arizona College of Medicine; and Chief Scientific Officer at Scottsdale Healthcare and US Oncology. Dr. Von Hoff graduated *cum laude* from Carroll University, and received his M.D. from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. He completed his internship and residency in internal medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, then completed a medical oncology fellowship at the National Cancer Institute. Dr. Von Hoff most recently served a six-year term on President Bush's National Cancer Advisory Board (June 2004 - March 2010) and has served on the FDA's Oncology Advisory Committee. He is the past President of the American Association for Cancer Research the world's largest cancer research organization, a Fellow of the American College of Physicians, and a member and past board member of the American Society of Clinical Oncology. Dr. Von Hoff is a founder of ILEX™ Oncology, Inc. (acquired by Genzyme after Ilex had 2 agents, alemtuzumab and clofarabine approved by the FDA for patients with leukemia). He received the 2010 David A. Karnofsky Memorial Award from the American Society of Clinical Oncology for his outstanding contributions to cancer research leading to significant improvement in patient care.

Jan T. Vilček, M.D., Ph.D.

Jan Vilček M.D., Ph.D. is a biomedical scientist, educator, inventor and philanthropist. He is currently a professor in the Department of Microbiology at the New York University School of Medicine and President of The Vilcek Foundation. Dr. Vilček, a native of Bratislava, Slovakia, (formerly Czechoslovakia) received his M.D. degree from Comenius University Medical School, Bratislava, Czechoslovakia in 1957; and his Ph.D. in Virology from the Institute of Virology, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Czechoslovakia in 1962. In 1964, Jan Vilček, with his wife Marica, defected from Communist Czechoslovakia during a three-day visit to Vienna. In 1965, the Vilčeks immigrated to the United States, and have since lived in New York City. Vilček devoted his scientific career to studies of soluble mediators that regulate the immune system (cytokines, including interferon and tumor necrosis factor (TNF)). In 1989 Vilček and NYU colleague, Junming Le, created a monoclonal antibody against TNF-alpha, a powerful promoter of inflammation. Collaborating with the biotechnology company Centocor (later acquired by Johnson & Johnson and recently renamed Janssen Biotech, Inc.), Vilček and Le helped to develop the biologic drug Remicade. With the royalties from the sales of Remicade, Jan and Marica have funded numerous programs at NYU School of Medicine and they established the Vilcek Foundation in 2000, which helps fulfill its mission by awarding annual Vilcek Prizes in biomedical science, as well as the arts. In 2013 Dr. Vilcek received the National Medal of Technology and Innovation.

Additional information is available at [Special Award](#) and [2014 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., Joan Massagué, Ph.D., Janet Rowley, M.D., Elizabeth Blackburn, Ph.D. and Phillip Sharp, 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., Kenneth C. Anderson, M.D., Joseph Schlessinger, Ph.D. and Dennis Slamon, M.D., Ph.D. for Clinical Development; M. Judah Folkman, M.D., John Cameron, M.D., Murray Brennan, M.D., Larry Norton, M.D., Azra Raza, M.D. and George Sledge, M.D. for Medicine; Paula Kim, Robert Bazell, Amy Dockser Marcus, Harold Freeman, Ellen Stovall and Gary Jobson 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 April 24, 2014, at a white-tie dinner held at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City in the Great Hall and at The Temple of Dendur in The Sackler Wing. 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 [Events](#) for more information, or to inquire about tickets.

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 or call 401-847-3286.



Advancing innovative research in understudied cancers

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