

CANCER RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The Mission of The Cancer Research Foundation Is To Help Find The Cures For Cancer Through Funding Laboratory and Clinical Research.

Connections

WITH FRIENDS

The late Dr. John E. Ultmann was the founder and director of the Cancer Research Center at the University of Chicago from 1973 - 1991. Going through old papers, I was reminded of the earlier days of the Cancer Research Foundation when my father, Maurice Goldblatt, was actively fund raising. Dr. Ultmann told me the following story:



Now let me put something in perspective here. I have devoted my whole career to cancer research since I entered the field in 1955 as a post-doctoral fellow at Columbia University. Maurice formally began his efforts for cancer research in 1947, at age 55.

About 20 years ago, I received a phone call from a gentleman in New York. His daughter had Hodgkin's Disease, an often fatal form of lymphoid cancer, and he wanted me to see her. I told him I would be flying to New York to attend a scientific conference, and if he could meet me at LaGuardia Airport, we could talk about what might be done for his daughter on the way into Manhattan.

I asked him how a New Yorker came to know about the University of Chicago cancer research programs and the Cancer Research Foundation. He said he was a supplier for Goldblatt's Department Stores, and he learned about the cancer programs that Maurice helped foster and develop through his business relationship. Then he said that he never thought he would have to take cancer in such a serious and personal way, and that he was grateful to Maurice Goldblatt for referring him to me.

Maurice always seemed to be here first, paving the way for the rest of us.

When his brother, Nathan, died of cancer in 1944, Maurice made the decision to retire from a successful business and devote his enormous energies and time to mobilizing funds to advance cancer research.

In the late 40s and early 50s, much less was known about this dread disease and research efforts were poorly organized. Maurice had no scientific background to guide him, but he asked questions and learned all that he needed to know to make sound decisions. He then applied his business sense to the problem at hand, identifying needs, selecting competent people and orchestrating the mobilization of the resources needed to get the job done.

Maurice's talents were recognized and he was among the first laymen named to serve on the National Cancer Advisory Council in 1950. The work that he and his colleagues did resulted in cancer research becoming a national goal. And Maurice would simply not settle for token grants to buy off the problem at hand. He was a persistent, feisty fighter, and he continued to lobby for the level of financial support that would be commensurate with the unmet needs and the magnitude of the problem.

There is a well-known prayer by the theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr,

which goes: Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference. This prayer did not apply to Maurice. The Lord did not grant

We cannot live for ourselves alone.

Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results.

— Herman Melville

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Young Investigator Awards

Each year, the Cancer Research Foundation accepts grant requests from young men and women engaged in first-project laboratory and/or clinical cancer research. These proposals come to the Foundation already reviewed and ranked by a faculty awards committee, using the National Institutes of Health peer review process. Only the innovative and bold proposals with practicable research plans are considered for funding.

After receipt by the Foundation, our medical consultants, Dr. Joseph B. Kirsner and Dr. Richard L. Schilsky, interpret the complex science to the trustees. Cancer Research Foundation trustees make all funding decisions.

Last November, five young scientists from the University of Chicago Medical Center were awarded young investigator grants:

- Philippe Cluzel, Ph.D.
- Philip P. Connell, M.D.
- Kay F. Macleod, Ph.D.
- Mark McKee, M.D.
- Olatoyosi Odenike, M.D.

These awards are for one year. At the end of the year, if the hypotheses have proven worthy of further study, this early research will be used as a basis for application for major outside funding.

Philippe Cluzel, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor
Department of Physics, Institute for
Biophysical Dynamics, and
the James Franck Institute
\$50,000.

NON-GENETIC INDIVIDUALITY IN BACTERIAL CHEMOTAXIS

Cancer may be caused by minute changes in a single cell embedded within a population of healthy cells. Since this single cell may proliferate

and develop cancer, it is clear that population measurements provide an incomplete understanding of how the disease is triggered. The goal of this proposal is to develop a new technology. We will measure simultaneously changes at the molecular level and behavioral characteristics of individual living cells.



Philip P. Connell, M.D.

Instructor
Department of Radiation and Cellular
Oncology
\$50,000.

SENSITIZING CANCER CELLS TO CHEMOTHERAPY AND RADIATION USING PEPTIDE- BASED INHIBITORS OF DNA REPAIR



Radiation and most chemotherapeutic drugs kill cancer cells by damaging their DNA.

However, tumor cells can become resistant to

treatments if they can repair this DNA damage. This research project will develop new drugs that interfere with the DNA repair machinery in cancer cells. If successful, these new agents will improve the effectiveness of present cancer treatments.

Kay F. Macleod, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor
The Ben May Institute for Cancer
Research
\$50,000.

MOLECULAR DISSECTION OF RB TUMOR SUPPRESSOR GENE FUNCTION IN VIVO

The function of a gene called retinoblastoma tumor suppressor gene (Rb) is disrupted in most human cancers. Kay has isolated a protein encoded by Rb – delta Rb – that plays a role in human breast, lung, and gastric cancers. She would like to generate experimental mice in which this gene is not expressed (i.e., it is “knocked out”) in order to compare the tumor incidence of these mice to other mutant mice. This will allow her to analyze both groups to determine exactly how this gene influences cell behavior in response to genetic or environmental stress.



Mark D. McKee, M.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Surgery
\$50,000.

**RECOGNITION OF CEA-
EXPRESSING TUMORS BY T CELL
RECEPTOR GENE- MODIFIED
PERIPHERAL BLOOD
LYMPHOCYTES**

A small group of T cells within the body's immune system can recognize and kill cancer cells, but this rarely results in the natural destruction of an entire tumor. Mark will identify the T cells that recognize a tumor protein called CEA and isolate the receptor genes in these cells that are responsible for tumor recognition. He will then test whether T cells that do not normally recognize tumors

become cancer-killing T cells when he transfers receptor genes to them in the laboratory. In the future, Mark hopes to use this strategy to generate large numbers of cancer- killing T cells, so that transfusions of these cells can be used to cause tumor destruction in patients.



Olatoyosi M. Odenike, M.D.
Instructor
Department of Medicine, Section of
Hematology/Oncology
\$50,000.

**A NOVEL THERAPY
BASED ON
INHIBITION OF
PDGFR SIGNALING
IN MYELOID
METAPLASIA WITH
MYELOFIBROSIS**

This project is designed to test the efficacy of inhibition of the protein PDGF (platelet derived growth factor) in patients with myeloid metaplasia with myelofibrosis (MMM). MMM is a form of chronic leukemia in which there is excessive fibrosis (scar tissue) in the bone marrow leading ultimately to low blood counts and problems with infections and bleeding. The cause of

the marrow fibrosis has been linked to high levels of the protein PDGF (platelet derived growth factor) in patients with this disease. The drug Gleevec works to block the action of this protein, and Olatoyosi will be evaluating its effects in patients with MMM by examining patients' blood and bone marrow samples in the laboratory.



Continued from the Front Page.

Connections

WITH FRIENDS

In 1973, the National Cancer Act was passed. The Act called for setting up a series of National Cancer Research Centers. Because of the track record the University of Chicago had developed in cancer research, stimulated in part through private support provided by the Cancer Research Foundation, we became one the first federally-designated cancer research centers in the country.

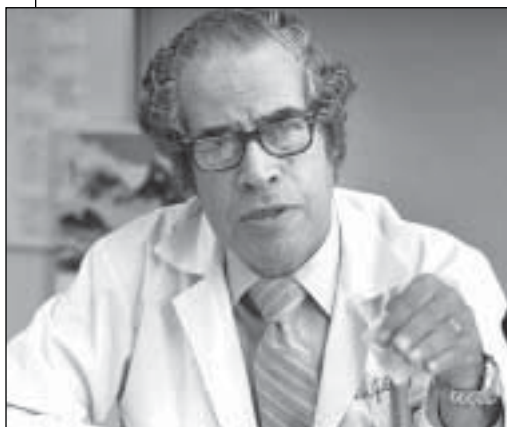
My mother, Bernice Goldblatt, my brother, Stanford and I continue the work that Maurice Goldblatt began so long ago. We are very fortunate to have a board of dedicated trustees. Because layers of scientific work have been done by forward-thinking scientists of the time, men and women who

were provided with the resources they needed to pursue new ideas, we are at a productive time in the development of newer and better treatments and earlier discoveries of cells that are misbehaving.

In this newsletter, read about a very early discovery made by Dr. Janet Rowley which has directly led to a new superstar cancer treatment.

Read about the new young scientists we are funding this year, cancer scientists who will make discoveries in the years to come.

*Merle Goldblatt Cohen
President*



Dr John Ultmann

him the serenity to accept that things could not be changed, but gave him the courage of his convictions, and the wisdom to know which people could help him make a difference.

WHY DO BASIC SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH?

The story of the development of an important anti-cancer drug



Early in her research career, Dr. Rowley received financial support from the Cancer Research Foundation. In 1999, President Clinton presented her with the National Medal of Science.

At the University of Chicago, Dr. Rowley serves as interim deputy Dean for Science in the Biological Sciences Division. She is the Blum-Riese Distinguished Service Professor of Medicine and of Molecular Genetics & Cell Biology.

In 1960, two Philadelphia physicians had observed that patients with chronic myeloid leukemia (CML) usually had one abnormally small chromosome. Chromosome 21 maybe; chromosome 22 maybe.

In 1972, at the University of Chicago, Dr. Janet Rowley discovered that white blood cells of patients with CML not only had a short chromosome in pair 22, but they also had a longer-than usual chromosome in pair 9.

Parts of chromosomes 9 and 22 had traded places, she surmised. This is called translocation. And maybe this was the cause of CML.

Dr. Rowley said that there was little interest in this outside the community of chromosome-studiers. This was a discovery with no immediate use. Little did she realize that this observation would lead to a drug heralded as the first big breakthrough in cancer treatment since Nixon declared war on the

disease in 1971.

In the 1980s, investigators discovered that the 9;22 translocation placed genes (parts of chromosomes 9 and 22) side-by-side, and that parts of these two genes formed an altered gene. The altered gene produced a new protein. This gene had been identified in 1969 by Dr. Herbert T. Abelson, now Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Chicago.

Researchers recognized this altered gene was the gene that breaks off and migrates from chromosome 9 to chromosome 22.

Dr. Abelson said that his discovery had nothing to do with anything clinical at the time. It was a discovery with no immediate use.

In the mid-1980s, the new protein was found to regulate cell division by initiating a chain of reactions leading to nonstop cell replication. Cancer.

A pharmaceutical company was developing molecules that might block this protein while leaving normal cells unharmed.

Clinical trials in patients with CML began, and in about half of the patients taking this pill, cells with the mutant 9;22 chromosome could not be detected. The new drug worked.

The Federal Drug Administration approved this new drug, Gleevec, manufactured by Novartis Pharmaceuticals, for treating CML. Since its introduction in 1998, Gleevec has brought more than 90 percent of newly diagnosed CML patients into remission, with few side effects. Clinical trials are being conducted using Gleevec for gastrointestinal stromal tumors, and there will be trials for leukemia and other cancers.

Dr. Janet Rowley said that *basic research* may take years or decades to bear fruit. "You have to believe in yourself, that what you are doing is important and really it's only a matter of time before its importance is recognized - and that people will then try to proceed to translate the observations you and others make into effective treatments for patients."

Source of information: Credits to author Candy Shufro who wrote the article published in University of Chicago Magazine, October 2001.

Thank You... Thank You... To Our 2001 Donors

(April 1, 2000 - March 31, 2001)

The Cancer Research Foundation has many generous donors. Our thank you to these donors should have been printed in our fall, 2001, newsletter. Because of the events of September 11th, that newsletter was not printed. This listing appears now, late, but with many thanks to each donor.

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James L. Madara has been named Dean of the Division of the Biological Sciences and the Pritzker School of Medicine and Vice President for Medical Affairs at the University of Chicago



Dr. Madara comes to the University of Chicago from Emory University Medical School in Atlanta, Georgia, where he is currently the William Patterson Timmie Professor and Chairman of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. One of the nation's foremost academic pathologists and an authority on

gastroenterology and cell biology, Dr. Madara's research has made important contributions to understanding the biology of the cells that line the digestive tract. These discoveries will lead to better understanding of infectious intestinal diseases, treatment of inflammatory intestinal disorders and improved drug delivery.

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