American Cancer Society Honors Distinguished Volunteers with the Medal of Honor

ATLANTA, Feb. 26, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- The American Cancer Society (ACS) awards the 2020 Medal of Honor to three doctors. The Medal of Honor is the most prestigious award bestowed to distinguished individuals or foundations who have made valuable contributions in the categories of basic research, cancer control, clinical research, and philanthropy.

The 2020 recipients include **Lewis C. Cantley**, PhD, for Basic Research; **Leslie Bernstein**, PhD, MS, for Cancer Control; and **Ching-Hon Pui**, MD, for Clinical Research.

"We are privileged to honor these leaders in the cancer community for their significant lifetime achievements to save lives from cancer," said Gary M. Reedy, chief executive officer of the American Cancer Society. "We acknowledge these individuals with our highest honor for their extraordinary contributions and dedication to fighting cancer."

Originally called the American Cancer Society Award, the Medal of Honor was first presented in 1949. Candidates for the Medal of Honor are nominated by members of the ACS Board of Directors and other individuals. This year's recipients are:

Lewis C. Cantley, PhD, Meyer Cancer Center, Weill Cornell Medical College, New York
Medal of Honor for Basic Research
This award honors scientists who have made significant fundamental research contributions with lasting impact on the cancer field or important discoveries or inventions within the field. Dr. Cantley is a cell biologist and biochemist who has made significant advances to the understanding of cancer metabolism. Among his most notable contributions are the discovery and study of the enzyme PI-3-kinase, now known to be important to understanding cancer and diabetes mellitus. He is currently a Meyer director and professor of Cancer Biology at the Sandra and Edward Meyer Cancer Center at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City. He was formerly a professor in the Departments of Systems Biology and Medicine at Harvard Medical School, and the director of Cancer Research at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, in Boston.

Leslie Bernstein, PhD, MS, City of Hope, Duarte, California
Medal of Honor in Cancer Control
This award honors individuals who have conducted research in and/or created and/or greatly advanced public health, public communication, or public policy that has had a major impact and/or stimulated new directions in cancer control. As a biostatistician and epidemiologist, Dr. Bernstein was instrumental in identifying physical activity as a means to reduce the risk of breast cancer. She is involved in projects to explore the links between hormone exposures, physical activity, obesity, and cancer. She is also examining how breast cancer impacts the lives of women after they are finished with treatment.

Ching-Hon Pui, MD, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee
Medal of Honor in Clinical Research
This award honors an Investigator whose contribution(s) have significantly improved the clinical outcome of patients. Dr. Pui is a pioneer in translating biomedical advances to treatments, helping increase the survival rate of childhood acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) to 94 percent. His work has improved survivors' quality of life by successfully abolishing cranial irradiation. His leadership has increased global treatment access and survival rates for childhood ALL.

The recipients will be recognized at a black-tie ceremony in New York on November 11.

Past recipients of the ACS Medal of Honor include former U.S. President and First Lady George H.W. Bush and Barbara Bush; Former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden; Edward M. Kennedy, senator from Massachusetts; George N. Papanicolau, M.D., inventor of the Pap test; Robert C. Gallo, M.D., recognized for his achievements in pioneering the field of human retrovirology; Judah Folkman, M.D., a leading researcher in the field of antiangiogenesis; Former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, M.D.; advice columnists Ann Landers and Abigail Van Buren; and American journalist Katie Couric.

To learn more about the American Cancer Society awards programs, visit cancer.org.

SOURCE American Cancer Society

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