Longest-Serving American Cancer Society Volunteer Dies at 105

Statement by John R. Seffrin, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer, American Cancer Society, on the Passing of Margot S. Freudenberg

ATLANTA — April 9, 2013 — “I was deeply saddened to learn today that Margot S. Freudenberg, who served the American Cancer Society as a volunteer for an extraordinary 71 years, died at her home in Charleston, South Carolina yesterday at age 105. Not only was Mrs. Freudenberg part of the Society longer than any other person in our nearly 100-year history, she contributed in a way that forever changed how we help people.

“In 1970 she founded the first American Cancer Society Hope Lodge, providing a free, home-like place to stay for patients who had to travel far from home for treatment. This free lodging saves cancer patients tens of millions of dollars each year, and makes it possible to access better treatment options, because a major financial barrier is removed. Today there are 31 Hope Lodge locations in 22 states and Puerto Rico, serving patients every day of the year, and more are planned.

“In addition to her remarkable contributions and decades of service and leadership at the American Cancer Society, Mrs. Freudenberg was an active volunteer for several other causes in her adopted home of Charleston, where she settled after leaving Nazi-era Germany with her husband and young son in 1939. Mrs. Freudenberg frequently said she felt indebted to the United States for taking her family in and offering support when they were vulnerable. The many honors and awards she earned throughout her life and the esteem in which she is held by the city of Charleston, and by all of us at the American Cancer Society, attest to her tireless work to repay that kindness.

“While Margot Freudenberg will be sincerely missed, the work that she began and that she inspired will continue to help people far into the future. In a very tangible way, she made the world a better place.”

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About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a global grassroots force of more than three million volunteers saving lives and fighting for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. As the largest voluntary health organization, the Society's efforts have contributed to a 20 percent decline in cancer death rates in the U.S. since 1991, and a 50 percent drop in smoking rates. Thanks in part to our progress nearly 14 million Americans who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will celebrate more birthdays this year. As we mark our 100th birthday in 2013, we're determined to finish the fight against cancer. We're finding cures as the nation’s largest private, not-for-profit investor in cancer research, ensuring people facing cancer have the help they need and continuing the fight for access to quality health care, lifesaving screenings, clean air, and more. For more information, to get help, or to join the fight, call us anytime, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.