

# American Cancer Society Awards Its Medal of Honor for Exceptional Contributions to Cancer Fight

## Three Scientists, One Philanthropist Earn the Society's Highest Honor

ATLANTA— November 16, 2012— The American Cancer Society – the nation's leading voluntary health organization and largest non-governmental investor in cancer research – has conferred its highest honor, the Medal of Honor, to four individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the fight for a world with less cancer and more birthdays. The honorees received their awards at a ceremony today during the American Cancer Society's Nationwide Volunteer and Staff Leadership Summit in Atlanta. They are: **Diane E. Meier, M.D., F.A.C.P.**, for Cancer Control; **Waun Ki Hong, M.D., F.A.C.P., D.M.Sc.**, for Clinical Research; **Kenneth C. Anderson, M.D.**, for Basic Research; and **Mrs. Janet Mordecai** for Philanthropy.

"These honorees represent the very best in the fight against cancer," said John R. Seffrin, Ph.D., chief executive officer, American Cancer Society. "They bring different skills and contribute in different ways, but each of our Medal of Honor recipients has helped make essential advancements that benefit all of us."

**Dr. Diane E. Meier**, one of the leading figures in the field of palliative medicine, received the Medal of Honor for Cancer Control in recognition of her pioneering leadership of the effort to bring non-hospice palliative care into mainstream medicine. Her work as a researcher, physician, and policy advocate has greatly improved quality of life for patients, survivors, and their families, and has inspired an entire field of professionals. One of her enduring contributions is making palliative care accessible throughout the trajectory of cancer, so that patients now can receive care focusing on quality of life even at the early phases of illness.

Dr. Meier is director of the Center to Advance Palliative Care, a national organization devoted to increasing the number and quality of palliative care programs in the United States. Dr. Meier also serves as director of the Lillian and Benjamin Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute; Professor of Geriatrics and Internal Medicine in the Brookdale Department of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine; and Catherine Gaisman Professor of Medical Ethics at Mount Sinai School of Medicine. She is also Principal Investigator of an NCI-funded five-year multisite study on the outcomes of hospital palliative care services in cancer patients.

In addition to her clinical and policy work, Dr. Meier has published extensively in all major peer-reviewed medical journals, made numerous appearances in mainstream media, and figured prominently in the 2002 Bill Moyers documentary series *On Our Own Terms: Dying in America*. She edited the first textbook on geriatric palliative care, and has contributed to more than 20 books. Her book, *Palliative Care: Transforming the Care of Serious Illness*, was published in 2010.

**Dr. Waun Ki Hong** received the Medal of Honor for Clinical Research in recognition of his many seminal contributions to the field of cancer medicine. Dr. Hong was the main architect of the landmark Veterans Administration Cooperative laryngeal preservation trial, which changed the way the disease is managed and served as a model for organ preservation for many other cancers. In a separate effort his work established proof that chemoprevention works for head and neck cancer, thereby helping define a new discipline in cancer prevention. Finally, he was the main architect and principal investigator for BATTLE (Biomarker-integrated Approaches of Targeted Therapy for Lung Cancer Elimination), the first successful biopsy-driven trial in lung cancer, which opened up a new paradigm of personalized cancer therapy in solid tumors.

In addition to his research and clinical work, Dr. Hong has played a major role in shaping national cancer policy through his service on the NCI Translational Research Working Group (TRWG); the U.S. FDA Oncologic Drug Advisory Committee (ODAC); the Prevention, Clinical and Therapeutic Subcommittee for the NCI External Board of Scientific Advisors (BSA); and as chair of the Subcommittee of Clinical Investigations for the National Cancer Advisory Board (NCAB). He also has served both the American Association for Cancer Research and the American Society of Clinical Oncology in leadership roles. Additionally he has authored nearly 700 scientific publications and edited 11 books, and has served on the editorial boards of 17 scientific journals.

Currently Dr. Hong is Head of the Division of Cancer Medicine and Professor and Vice Provost, Clinical Research at MD Anderson Cancer Center, where he also serves as American Cancer Society Professor and the Samsung

Distinguished University Chair in Cancer Medicine. He is a past recipient of the Society's Distinguished Achievement in Cancer Award.

**Dr. Kenneth C. Anderson** was awarded the American Cancer Society Medal of Honor for Basic Research for his contributions to the understanding of the cause and treatment of multiple myeloma and his service to the cancer research community. Dr. Anderson is both a basic and clinical scientist who has made formative contributions in the understanding of multiple myeloma, and has been a leader in bringing new advances into clinical practice for treating it. Among many breakthroughs, Dr. Anderson identified the varying growth mechanisms of myeloma cell at the cellular and molecular level, and found mechanisms of resistance to apoptosis – naturally occurring programmed cell death – which may lead to new cancer therapies.

Dr. Anderson is currently the Kraft Family Professor of Medicine and Associate Medical Director, Brigham and Women's Hospital Blood Bank; Vice Chair, Joint Program in Transfusion Medicine, Harvard Medical School; and Director, Jerome Lipper Multiple Myeloma Center, Chief, Division of Hematologic Neoplasia, and Director, Lebow Institute for Myeloma Therapeutics, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. He has published hundreds of peer reviewed papers, reviews, book chapters, and editorials, and written or edited 25 books, monographs, and text books. He also has served on the editorial board of 29 publications. Among many prestigious national and international honors and awards, Dr. Anderson has received an American Cancer Society Professorship.

For her outstanding philanthropic contribution to further the American Cancer Society's mission of eliminating cancer as a major health concern, **Janet Mordecai** has been awarded the Medal of Honor for Philanthropy. Mrs. Mordecai, a retired nurse, is well known for her many contributions to her local community of Denver, Colorado. In 2008, she made one of the largest individual scientific research gifts in the American Cancer Society's history in order to establish the Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia type 2 (MEN2) Thyroid Cancer Consortium. The individual projects made possible by this gift cover a wide spectrum of MEN2 research, including epidemiology, drug development and fundamental genetic studies. This research is likely to have a significant impact on our understanding of a number of cancers.

Among her many philanthropic commitments, Mrs. Mordecai created the Daniel and Janet Mordecai Rural Health Nursing Endowed Chair, as well as four Rural Health Nursing Endowed Fellowships at her alma mater, the University of Colorado College of Nursing. Her support has also included contributions toward fellowships in palliative care at the University of Colorado Palliative Care Program; and the Mordecai Children's Garden at the Denver Botanic Gardens. Mrs. Mordecai's commitment and generosity also inspired the board of directors of the Society's Great West Division to launch a new effort across the Division's 12 states to increase the Society's research investment through volunteer-based fundraising activities. This resulted in new donors contributing an additional \$507,000 for new research grants.

Past recipients of the Society's Medal of Honor include former U.S. President George H.W. Bush and former First Lady Barbara Bush; the late Honorable Edward M. Kennedy, Senator from Massachusetts; George N. Papanicolaou, M.D., inventor of the Pap test; Robert C. Gallo, M.D., recognized for his achievements in pioneering the field of human retrovirology; the late Judah Folkman, M.D., a leading researcher in the field of antiangiogenesis; C. Everett Koop, M.D., former U.S. Surgeon General; and advice columnists Ann Landers and Abigail Van Buren.

The American Cancer Society combines an unyielding passion with nearly a century of experience to save lives and end cancer for good. As a global grassroots force of three million volunteers, we fight for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. We save lives by helping you stay well by preventing cancer or detecting it early, helping you get well by being there for you during and after a diagnosis, by finding cures through groundbreaking discovery and fighting back through public policy. As the nation's largest non-governmental investor in cancer research, contributing more than \$3.8 billion, we turn what we know about cancer into what we do. As a result, an estimated 13.7 million people in America who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will be celebrating birthdays this year. To learn more about us or to get help, call us anytime, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit [cancer.org](http://cancer.org).

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