

American Cancer Society Honors Outstanding Individual Contributions to Fight Against Cancer

Awards Honor Accomplishments in Service, Volunteerism and Humanitarianism

New York City 2008/11/21 -Four Americans whose unique talents and dedication have helped reduce the burden of cancer today received prestigious awards from the American Cancer Society for their work in volunteerism, humanitarianism and distinguished service. The Society, the nation's largest voluntary health organization, honors individuals whose work is helping to make the organization's mission of eliminating cancer as a major health problem a reality. In gratitude for their inspirational service to mankind, the Society's National volunteer leaders presented these annual awards to these outstanding individuals in ceremonies during the organization's annual meeting in New York City.

Michelle M. Le Beau, Ph.D. and Frances M. Visco received the Distinguished Service Award in recognition of major contributions and commitment in the field of cancer. Phylecia D. Wilson, of Clarkesville, Georgia, was awarded the National Volunteer Leadership Award in recognition of long and exemplary volunteer service to the Society. The late Florence S. Wald, R.N., M.N., M.S., F.A.A.N. received the Humanitarian Award for her pioneering efforts in hospice care and her outstanding contributions to the nursing practice.

Michelle M. Le Beau, Ph.D., of Chicago, Illinois, Professor of Medicine, and Director of the University of Chicago Cancer Research Center, received the Distinguished Service Award for her extraordinary work in therapy-related cancers. Dr. Le Beau has also shown leadership in identifying recurring genetic abnormalities in hematological cancers, and for her groundbreaking research leading to, among other findings, the recognition that there are several distinct genetic and clinical subtypes of therapy-related myelodysplastic syndrome and acute myeloid leukemia that are closely associated with the nature of the preceding cancer treatment. Dr. Le Beau has published more than 410 papers on cytogenetic abnormalities in human leukemias, and is board-certified in clinical cytogenetics by the American Board of Medical Genetics.

Frances M. Visco, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, received the Distinguished Service Award for her unwavering commitment to breast cancer advocacy and women's health issues. Notable accomplishments for Ms. Visco include founding and leading the National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC) and championing cancer research funding on the environmental causes of cancer. Ms. Visco is also known for her significant role in gaining the U.S. Department of Defense's support of cancer research and for her leadership on the President's Cancer Panel, National Action Plan on Breast Cancer, and National Cancer Policy Board. Ms. Visco has appeared frequently on national television discussing women's health issues and has testified before various Congressional committees and panels. She is also a twenty-year breast cancer survivor, and her women's health advocacy efforts have served as an inspirational force in the fight against cancer.

Phylecia D. Wilson, of Clarkesville, Georgia, received the National Volunteer Leadership Award for her more than three decades of invaluable service to the American Cancer Society in fundraising, cancer control, and patient services. Her leadership at the local and nationwide levels of the American Cancer Society Relay For Life® community fundraising and mobilization movement has earned her the Relay For Life Hall of Fame award in 2001, which only four other volunteers have received. Ms. Wilson has worked tirelessly to motivate people nationwide to become cancer advocates through her involvement with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action NetworkSM and the national and Georgia Public Policy Committee, and has inspired countless people as a cancer survivor and spokesperson.

The late Florence S. Wald, R.N., M.N., M.S., F.A.A.N., of Branford, Connecticut, received the Humanitarian Award for her pioneering efforts in hospice care and her outstanding contributions to the nursing practice. Dr. Wald's commitment to providing comfort, dignity, and high-quality end-of-life care for all patients has made her a driving force in the hospice movement. Dr. Wald is credited with bringing the hospice movement to the United States from Europe, and establishing the first hospice unit in the United States. Her role in reshaping nursing education to focus on patients and their families has changed the perception of hospice care in this country.

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by saving lives, diminishing suffering and preventing cancer through research, education, advocacy and service. Founded in 1913

and with national headquarters in Atlanta, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across the United States. For more information anytime, call toll free 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

Becky Steinmark Erwin
National Director, Media Relations
American Cancer Society
404-417-5860
becky.erwin@cancer.org

Claire Greenwell
Media Relations Specialist
American Cancer Society
404-417-5883
claire.greenwell@cancer.org
