

# New Volunteers Selected to Lead American Cancer Society

## Nation's Largest Voluntary Health Organization Elects Colorectal Cancer Expert Alan G. Thorson, M.D., F.A.C.S., Banking Industry Expert George W.P. Atkins To Lead National Volunteer Board of Directors

Los Angeles 2009/11/18 -The American Cancer Society, the nation's largest voluntary health organization, elected 11 new officers to its volunteer 2009-2010 National Board of Directors during its annual meeting this week in Los Angeles. The organization's National Assembly and National Board of Directors, the Society's primary governing bodies, have been comprised of elected volunteers since the organization's inception in 1913.

Leading the Assembly will be the newly elected President Alan G. Thorson, M.D., F.A.C.S., of Omaha, Neb., and presiding over the Board will be Chair George W.P. Atkins of Atlanta, Ga. Other officers elected were Edward E. Partridge, M.D., of Birmingham, Ala., president-elect; Stephen L. Swanson, M.B.A., of Allison Park, Penn., chair-elect; Cynthia M. LeBlanc, EdD, M.A., of Richmond, Cal., vice chair; Daniel P. Heist, C.P.A., of State College, Penn., treasurer; Lila R. Johnson, R.N., M.P.H., C.H.E.S., of Honolulu, HI, secretary; W. Phil Evans, III, M.D., F.A.C.R., of Dallas, Texas., first vice president; Vincent T. DeVita, Jr., M.D., of New Haven, Conn., second vice president; Elizabeth T.H. Fontham, M.P.H., Dr.P.H., of New Orleans, La., immediate past president; and Van Velsor Wolf, J.D., of Phoenix, Ariz., immediate past chair.

"It is truly an honor and privilege to lead an organization that is saving lives and working to create a world with less cancer and more birthdays," said Alan G. Thorson, M.D., F.A.C.S., president of the Society. "While we are making great progress in the fight against cancer, we still have a great deal of work to do help people stay well by preventing cancer or detecting it early; help people get well by being there for them during and after a cancer diagnosis; find cures through investment in groundbreaking discovery; and fight back by rallying lawmakers to pass laws to defeat cancer and by rallying communities worldwide to join the fight."

**Alan G. Thorson, M.D., F.A.C.S.**, will be the new president. Dr. Thorson is a clinical professor of surgery at both Creighton University and the University of Nebraska, and a nationally recognized colon and rectal surgeon serving as program director for Colon and Rectal Surgery at Creighton University. Dr. Thorson is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons and the Southwestern Surgical Congress. He is a member of a number of other professional organizations including the American Medical Association, the Society of Surgical Oncology, the Society for Surgery of the Alimentary Tract, the American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy and the Society of American Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeons. Dr. Thorson is currently Chair of CARES, the Comprehensive Cancer Control Program of Nebraska, and is the past Chief Medical Officer of the High Plains Division of the American Cancer Society.

Dr. Thorson was also elected president of the Society's advocacy affiliate, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Board, in 2004. He is a recipient of the American Cancer Society St. George National Award and has served as chair of the Incidence and Mortality Ends Committee, the National Assembly Agenda Advisory Group, and as a member of the Health Promotions and Colon Cancer Advisory Groups.

Thorson succeeds **Elizabeth T.H. Fontham, M.P.H., Dr.P.H.**, who remains an officer as immediate past president. Dr. Fontham is Dean and Professor of Epidemiology at Louisiana State University School of Public Health and Professor of Pathology at the Louisiana State University School of Medicine, and her major area of research is cancer epidemiology with a focus on the etiology of tobacco- and diet-related cancers.

**George W.P. Atkins**, the new chair of the National Board of Directors, has been a Society volunteer since 1973. After a 33-year career in the banking industry, Atkins retired from Wachovia Bank, where his last position was as an executive vice president in the trust department. Atkins has served on many national and South Atlantic Division committees, including the board of directors and the governance committee. He also served as chairman of the board, secretary and treasurer in the Society's former Southeast Division (serving Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina). In his community, Mr. Atkins serves as Chairman of the Children's Rehabilitation Center, an endowment fund providing support for disabled adults and children. He also serves on the board and was the former chair of The Frazer Center, a day care facility for disabled adults and children. He is chairman of the distribution committee for the Mason Transplant Trust providing organ transplant assistance for needy Georgians. In addition, he serves as a Trustee of Canterbury Court, a continuing care retirement home sponsored by two local Episcopal Churches. Mr. Atkins has also served as a past board member of the Woodruff Arts Center, the Atlanta History Center and the Atlanta College of Art.

Atkins replaces **Van Velsor Wolf, J.D.**, who will remain on the board as immediate past chair. A Society volunteer for more than 24 years, Wolf is the senior environmental lawyer at Snell & Wilmer in Phoenix, Ariz. He served as the president of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Board of Directors, treasurer of the National Board of Directors, chair of the Audit Committee, chairman of the Society's Arizona and Southwest Divisions, and on numerous national committees. A recipient of the Society's St. George Medal, Wolf remains an active volunteer with the Great West Division.

**Edward E. Partridge, M.D.**, president-elect, is the director of the Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Serving as the past chairman of the Mid-South Division of the Society, Partridge is also the principal investigator of the NCI-funded Deep South Network for Cancer Control and the Morehouse School of Medicine/Tuskegee University/University of Alabama at Birmingham Comprehensive Cancer Center Partnership. His efforts have helped gain Alabama participation in the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program.

**Stephen L. Swanson**, chair-elect, has more than 25 years of executive experience in business, including senior positions in the energy and banking industries. He has an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School, and currently is president of his own business advisory company. Swanson has served as a member of the Society's National Board of Directors, as chair of the Society's Pennsylvania Division Board of Directors, and as chair of the Stakeholder Relations Committee.

**Cynthia M. LeBlanc, Ed.D., M.A.**, vice-chair, has more than 30 years of experience in academic administration in several school districts in California, for which she has received numerous recognitions including the Ella Hill Hutch Leadership Award from Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA). A Society volunteer for more than 21 years, LeBlanc has served in various different capacities of the Society's California Board of Directors since 1994, including serving as chair from 2004-2005.

**Daniel P. Heist, C.P.A.**, treasurer, is the director of Internal Audit at Penn State University. Mr. Heist has been active with the Society since 1988, and has served in numerous capacities both at the Pennsylvania Division and on a national level. He has more than 25 years of auditing and accounting experience. Prior to being at Penn State, he was senior manager with Deloitte & Touche, LLP, specializing in serving the higher education sector.

**Lila R. Johnson, R.N., M.P.H., C.H.E.S.**, secretary, is the statewide coalition coordinator for the Hawaii Department of Health Tobacco Prevention and Education Program. Ms. Johnson has been a volunteer with the Society for more than 30 years, and has served at all levels of the organization including president of the Honolulu Unit and both president and board chair of the former Hawaii Pacific Division. She is also the Representative from North America to the International Network of Women Against Tobacco Executive Board.

**W. Phil Evans, M.D., F.A.C.R.**, first vice-president, is the director of the University of Texas Southwestern Center for Breast Care and associate vice president for Clinical Imaging Services. He is also the current president of the Society of Breast Imaging. His efforts in breast imaging led to the development of the Susan G. Komen Breast Center at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, the first dedicated breast center in Texas. Dr. Evans has served in numerous capacities in the Society's High Plains Division for more than 20 years.

**Vincent T. DeVita, Jr., M.D.**, second vice-president, is professor of Medicine, and professor of Epidemiology and Public Health at Yale University School of Medicine. Dr. DeVita spent the early part of his career at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) of the National Institutes of Health, and in 1980 was appointed by the President of the United States as Director of NCI and the National Cancer Program. While at NCI, he was instrumental in developing combination chemotherapy programs that ultimately led to an effective regimen of curative chemotherapy of Hodgkin's disease and diffuse large cell lymphomas. Dr. DeVita has also served as Physician-In-Chief at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, and professor of Medicine at Cornell University School of Medicine until he returned to Yale in 1993.

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 about \$3.4 billion, we turn what we know about cancer into what we do. As a result, more than 11 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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