

# American Cancer Society Awards Highest Honor for Outstanding Contributions to Cancer Fight

## Society's Medal of Honor Awarded to Four Scientists, One Family Foundation

**ATLANTA— November 10, 2011**— 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 and one family who have made outstanding contributions to the fight for a world with less cancer and more birthdays. This year's winners, who will receive their awards at a ceremony during the American Cancer Society's annual meeting in Atlanta, are: **Graham Colditz, M.B.B.S., M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H.**, for Cancer Control Research; **John Mendelsohn, M.D.**, for Clinical Research; **Stephen B. Baylin, M.D. and Peter A. Jones, Ph.D., D.Sc.**, for Basic Research; and **the Duchossois Family Foundation**, for Philanthropy. The Medal of Honor, originally called the American Cancer Society Award, was first given in 1949.

Graham Colditz, an epidemiologist and professor of medicine who has spent more than 25 years conducting research focused on the causes and prevention of chronic disease, particularly among women, will be awarded the Medal of Honor for Cancer Control Research. Dr. Colditz has been a leader in establishing the connections between numerous lifestyle factors and the risk of cancer and other diseases. He was responsible for documenting that current use of postmenopausal hormone therapy increases the risk of breast cancer, and he documented an association between smoking and risk of stroke and total mortality among women, and between weight gain and the risk of diabetes. Other areas of his expertise include tobacco and obesity in relation to cancer.

Since 2006 Dr. Colditz has been Associate Director for Prevention and Control at the Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center, Washington University School of Medicine and Barnes Jewish Hospital, St. Louis and the Niess-Gain Family Professor of Surgery, and Professor of Medicine at Washington University School of Medicine. Prior to these appointments he spent 23 years at Harvard University, where he held several positions at different times, including Professor of Medicine and Professor of Epidemiology, associate director of Channing Laboratory, Department of Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, director of the Harvard Center for Cancer Prevention, and leader of the Cancer Epidemiology Program in the Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center. Dr. Colditz has published more than 800 original research manuscripts, and has edited or contributed chapters to more than 100 books on cancer prevention and health promotion.

John Mendelsohn M.D., president, MD Anderson Cancer Center (1996-2011), is receiving the Medal of Honor for Clinical Research. He has been a visionary leader in bringing the promise of antibody-based therapies and therapies targeting the products of oncogenes from the idea stage into physicians' offices. In 1981 Dr. Mendelsohn and his colleague Dr. Gordon Sato put forward the hypothesis that targeting receptors for growth factors on cancer cells, and their associated signal transduction pathways, might provide an effective means of therapy. His decades of leadership and effort have taken this idea from the laboratory, to preclinical studies and into clinical practice. His pioneering research has led to the development of EGF receptor tyrosine kinase inhibition as a major area of research and clinical care in oncology today, involving many dozens of clinical studies and a number of approved drugs for treating cancer.

In 1996, after 15 years as a professor and founding director of the cancer center at the

University of California San Diego, and more than a decade as Chair of the Department of Medicine at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, where he also held the Winthrop Rockefeller Chair in Medical Oncology, Dr. Mendelsohn became the third president of the MD Anderson Cancer Center. Under his leadership, MD Anderson Cancer Center grew to be regarded as among the very best institutions by researchers, clinicians, and patients. In his new role at MD Anderson, he is co-director of the Institute for Personalized Cancer Therapy. Dr. Mendelsohn has published widely on cancer molecular biology and clinical trials, and served as founding editor-in-chief of Clinical Cancer Research. He has received numerous national and international awards and is a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences.

Stephen B. Baylin, M.D. of Johns Hopkins University, and Peter A. Jones, Ph.D., D.Sc., of the University of Southern California, are being honored jointly for their contributions to Basic Research. The pair are noted as pioneers in research on the epigenetics of cancer. They are specifically being awarded the Medal of Honor for their discovery of reversible epigenetic silencing of tumor suppressor genes and the stable epigenetic alteration of gene expression. This discovery has shown that potentially modifiable lifestyle, dietary, and environmental factors play a key role in cancer risk. This has reoriented the way scientists think about prevention and early detection of cancer, and is leading the way toward personalized cancer prevention and treatment by elevating our understanding of how cancer is not just a genetic disease.

Dr. Baylin is the Associate Director for Research and Deputy Director of the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins. He is also Professor of Oncology and Professor of Medicine at the university, where he has worked for more than 35 years. Dr. Jones is Director of the USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, and Distinguished Professor of Urology, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California.

The Duchossois Family Foundation is receiving the Medal of Honor for Philanthropy in recognition of the family's generosity and dedication to funding research, patient and family services, and treatment facilities, as well as leadership in raising funds to help people deal with cancer. Craig J. Duchossois is accepting the award on behalf of his family. In 2003 the Duchossois Family Foundation donated the seed funding that was used to establish the Patient Navigation Services program<sup>®</sup>. This program has helped tens of thousands of people over the years by connecting them with highly trained experts who help them make informed choices with regard to cancer treatment options, support services, and lifestyle choices. Additionally Mr. Duchossois, his sister Kimberly T. Duchossois, and other members of their family, have volunteered in a number of leadership capacities with the Society's Illinois Division over several years, and have been instrumental in helping to raise millions of additional dollars beyond their own support.

The Duchossois Family Foundation is one of the most respected family foundations in Illinois, having given more than \$100 million to charity over the last 30 years, with the emphasis being on causes related to fighting cancer. This includes more than \$11 million to the Society.

Past Medal of Honor recipients include former U.S. President George H.W. Bush and former First Lady Barbara Bush; Lance Armstrong; 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; Judah Folkman, M.D., a leading researcher in the field of antiangiogenesis; C. Everett Koop, M.D., former U.S. Surgeon General; and advice authors 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 \$3.5 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](https://cancer.org).

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