

## CR&T'S 2015 HALL OF FAME DINNER: CELEBRATING 47 YEARS OF COMMITMENT



L-R: David Boule, Amanda Johns Perez, Jennifer Johns Friel, Julia Johns and Dr. Richard Silver

On November 17, CR&T welcomed more than 200 guests to our signature event, the Cancer Survivors Hall of Fame Dinner. Held at the elegant Essex House in New York City, this year's dinner honored four extraordinary women for their role in the fight against cancer. Fran Drescher, the award-winning actress, author, and health advocate, was CR&T's 2015 Cancer Survivor honoree. The Humanitarian Award was presented to the Johns family – Julia Johns and her daughters, Jennifer Johns Friel and Amanda Johns Perez – for their longstanding commitment to CR&T's mission. Our favorite master of ceremonies, Raphael Miranda, the Emmy Award-winning weekend and noon meteorologist for NBC 4 New York, brought warmth and humor to the festivities.

In his opening remarks, CR&T's president, David Boule, thanked the honorees and guests for their support, which will allow the organization to fund critical initiatives. He also acknowledged the dedication and hard work of the dinner committee co-chairs, Maria Brisbane and Anne Templeton, and their fellow committee members, Barbara Silver and Diane Silver.

### Outstanding Honorees

Dr. Richard T. Silver, CR&T's vice president and medical director, presented the Humanitarian Award to the wife and daughters of his former patient, David Johns, who had fought a valiant battle against myelofibrosis. "The Johns women are not just friends of CR&T, they *are* CR&T," he said.

In her acceptance speech, Jennifer recalled that the family was initially told that there was no treatment and no hope for her father. Then, an Internet search led them to Dr. Silver and CR&T. "That was a turning point for our family," she said. After David's passing in 1998, his family resolved to ensure a brighter future for all patients and families whose lives are touched by cancer. Amanda, who serves on CR&T's board of directors, expressed her gratitude to "the physician-scientists who work tirelessly and passionately to create a framework for the patients and their families to hang their hope on."

Board member Anne Templeton introduced her friend Fran Drescher, who is known to millions of TV viewers as



Fran Drescher

"The Nanny." A 15-year uterine cancer survivor, Fran spoke about her long struggle to obtain an accurate diagnosis, which led her to establish the non-profit Cancer Schmancer Movement. She noted that Cancer Schmancer's focus on early detection, prevention, and advocacy complements CR&T's commitment to new treatments and a cure.

The recipient of many honors for her health advocacy, Fran is a U.S. State Department Public Diplomacy envoy for Women's Health. She has traveled the world to meet with heads of state, cancer patients, and local NGOs, and to visit military bases and hospitals. "Sometimes the best gifts come in the ugliest packages," she said of her life-changing cancer journey. "I'm not glad I had cancer. I don't wish it on anyone, but I'm the better for it."

Guests had the opportunity to bid on a wide range of silent auction items, including a guitar signed by Chris Martin of Coldplay, a game of golf with football legend Joe Namath, and luxury vacations. Thanks to the generosity and commitment of our supporters, the event raised nearly \$390,000 for CR&T and its cutting-edge research initiatives.

## HALL OF FAME SUPPORTERS

CR&T is deeply grateful to the generous and loyal friends who make the Cancer Survivors Hall of Fame Dinner a success, year after year.

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*CR&T extends its deepest regrets to any donor whose name may have been inadvertently omitted from this list.*

**Our 2016 Cancer Survivors Hall of Fame dinner will be held at the Essex House on Tuesday, November 15. Please mark your calendar – and look for more details in upcoming issues of CR&T News!**

## DAVE BOULE HONORED AS MPN HERO



*Dave Boule (R) receives congratulations from Dr. Richard T. Silver*

On December 4, 2015, David Boule, CR&T's President, was recognized as an "MPN Hero" for his outstanding work as an advocate for patients with myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPNs). Dave was one of eight honorees – seven individuals and an organization – to receive the prestigious award at a gala dinner, held in Orlando, Florida, during the annual meeting of the American Society of Hematology. "We want to find a cure for this disease," he said. "It's been fun to see that we do have an impact on science and the lives of patients with MPNs." The award program featured inspiring video profiles of Dave and his fellow honorees. To view the videos, please visit [www.voicesofmpn.com/meet-mpn-heroes.aspx](http://www.voicesofmpn.com/meet-mpn-heroes.aspx).

Sponsored by Incyte Corporation and *CURE* magazine, the MPN Heroes Recognition Program is designed to offer hope by increasing awareness of these rare blood cancers and highlighting individuals and organizations that have made important contributions to MPN care. In honor of each recipient whose work has an impact on the broader MPN community, Incyte makes a generous charitable contribution of \$25,000 to an organization engaged in MPN activities. We are grateful to Dave for specifying that this donation be directed to CR&T.

In her keynote address, Dr. Jennifer Arnold, a physician and star of TLC's reality show, "The Little Couple," recalled how she felt when she was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. "I never got to meet another person with my type of cancer," said Arnold, who is now free of the disease. "The fact that you are bringing people together who are going through rare cancers is incredible, and will make such a huge difference in their lives."

This is the second year that a member of CR&T's leadership has received this prestigious award. In 2014, Dr. Richard T. Silver, CR&T's Vice President and Medical Director, was recognized for his accomplishments as a physician and for his commitment to MPN patients and families. All of us at CR&T are proud to congratulate Dave Boule on this honor, and grateful for the opportunity to build a better world for patients and families who are living with MPNs.



### YOU MAKE GREAT THINGS POSSIBLE...

Thanks to friends like you, the New Year promises new milestones for CR&T – and new research discoveries that will prolong and save lives!

#### **With your help, we will...**

- *Advance research and patient care.* Our multi-year, multi-million-dollar commitment to the Silver MPN Center at Weill Cornell will enable this major translational research center to expand its clinical trials program, launch a biorepository and patient database, and conduct groundbreaking basic research. The goal: new treatments -- and ultimately, a cure for these rare blood cancers.
- *Provide seed funding for innovative research* into common cancers, including breast and lung cancer.

#### **Help us build a brighter future for cancer patients and their families!**

- Donate online at [www.crt.org](http://www.crt.org) or use the enclosed envelope.
- Go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) to ensure that CR&T receives a donation every time you shop online!

**Thank you for your support!**

## NEW STUDY OFFERS HOPE FOR PATIENTS WITH MANTLE CELL LYMPHOMA

CR&T's Medical Advisory Board (MAB) comprises internationally respected physician-scientists from the world's leading cancer centers. Our friends and donors often ask us for the latest news about the research our MAB members are conducting. Here, we report on the results of a new clinical trial, which were published in the nation's most prestigious medical journal, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, on November 5, 2015. The authors include two MAB members, Drs. Morton Coleman and John Leonard. Both physicians, as well as the principal investigator, Jia Ruan, MD, PhD, are affiliated with New-York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical College. Although CR&T did not fund this research, it is an excellent example of a small study with the potential to have a large impact on a group of patients whose current treatment options are limited.



L-R: Drs. Jia Ruan, Morton Coleman and John Leonard

### About MCL

Patients develop MCL when B-lymphocytes, a type of white blood cell, become malignant. The cancerous lymphocytes are located in a part of the lymph node known as the mantle zone. MCL often spreads to multiple lymph nodes and to other parts of the body, such as the bone marrow, spleen, and gastrointestinal tract.

According to the American Cancer Society, MCL accounts for only about five to eight percent of lymphomas. It primarily affects men, and the average age of patients is in the mid-60s. MCL is generally considered to be incurable, but a variety of treatment options are available, and numerous clinical trials are underway.

The most common treatment for MCL is intensive chemotherapy. Unfortunately, some patients – especially those who are older – are not able to tolerate this treatment. The

aim of the new study was to develop an effective, targeted therapeutic regimen that would be less toxic than chemotherapy. To this end, the researchers combined rituximab, an antibody therapy that is often administered together with chemotherapy, with lenalidomide, an immunomodulatory drug. Rituximab targets CD20, a protein found on the surface of B-lymphocytes. Lenalidomide has been shown to regulate specific immune cells that play a role in a number of cancers, including some blood cancers. Although lenalidomide is approved as a treatment for MCL patients who experience a recurrence, it had never been tested as a first-line therapy for the disease.

### Study Results

A total of 38 patients were enrolled in the study from July 2011 through April 2014. In addition to New-York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell, three medical centers participated: Moffitt Cancer Center (Tampa, FL), the University of Pennsylvania Abramson Cancer Center, and the University of Chicago Medical Center. The median age of the patients was 65. None had received treatment previously, and all had stage III or stage IV disease.

Each patient received the combination treatment for about a year as induction, followed by maintenance therapy with rituximab and lower-dose lenalidomide for a treatment course that lasted at least three years. Of the 36 patients who could be evaluated, 92 percent had a complete or partial response to therapy. The response was also long-lasting: 85 percent of the study participants were alive two years after therapy and had not experienced any disease progression. Patients who responded to treatment reported that they maintained or improved their quality of life.

The most common side effects – which the researchers expected – were reduced levels of neutrophils, a type of white blood cell (50 percent of patients); rash (29 percent); reduced platelet levels (13 percent); tumor flare and anemia (11 percent each); and fatigue and pneumonia (8 percent each).

In an interview with Medscape.com, Dr. Brad Kahl, a spokesman for the American Society of Hematology, noted that the results of the study were “very promising and intriguing,” but added that “we do need further study... with a larger population and longer follow-up.” The study's authors reached a similar conclusion, adding that “our data support further evaluation of the lenalidomide plus rituximab regimen, potentially in combination with other agents.”

## PATIENT SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHTS LATEST RESEARCH AND TREATMENTS

*“This was my first symposium and I was very satisfied with the information provided and the high quality and expertise of the speakers. It was an extremely informative and well-run day.”*

*“Excellent! Thank you very much! Great learning opportunity!”*

These were typical comments from guests who joined us for the 8th International Patient Symposium on Myeloproliferative Neoplasms (MPNs), held in New York City on November 4, 2015. Nearly 200 patients, family members, and friends attended the full-day educational event, which focused on the latest developments in MPN research and treatment. CR&T was proud to host this program, which featured presentations by distinguished basic scientists and clinical research physicians from the world's most prestigious MPN centers.

The guests, who represented 20 states and several foreign countries, were welcomed by Dr. Lewis C. Cantley, Director of the Cancer Center of Weill Cornell Medical College and recipient of the Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences.

After a day of presentations and disease-specific Q&A sessions led by the faculty, attendees had the opportunity to tour the research laboratories at Weill Cornell's state-of-the-art Belfer Research Building, where the Symposium was held. Three young researchers led the tours and engaged in lively discussions with the guests.



*Symposium Leadership and Speakers:*

*First row (L-R): Drs. Jason Gotlib and Richard T. Silver; David Boule*

*Second row (L-R): Drs. Srdan Verstovsek, Jerry Spivak, Robert Kralovics, Anne Mullally, Andrew I. Schafer, and Ruben Mesa*

The Symposium is held every two years in conjunction with a professional education conference, the International Congress on MPNs, Myelodysplasia and Chronic Myeloid Leukemia. This year, for the first time, patients who attended the Symposium were also able to attend the Congress free of charge.

Dr. Richard T. Silver, CR&T's Vice President and Medical Director, was the program chair. David Boule, CR&T's President, chaired the Symposium's patient committee, which helped develop the program. Guests filled out evaluation forms, which the committee will use to plan the 2017 event. “We strive to make the program relevant to both newly diagnosed patients and people like me, who have been living with the disease for many years,” says Boule. “It's a great opportunity to get the information you need to be an active member of your healthcare team, to interact with leaders in the field, and to share tips and experiences with other patients and family members.”

### Watch Symposium Videos

Couldn't join us for the Symposium? Here's your chance to catch up on the latest developments – presented by renowned MPN experts! Visit [www.crf.org/8th-International-Patient-Symposium-on-Myeloproliferative-Neoplasms-Videos](http://www.crf.org/8th-International-Patient-Symposium-on-Myeloproliferative-Neoplasms-Videos) to view eight presentations on key topics, including genetics, treatments, clinical trials, complications, and living with MPNs from day to day.

### Thank You to Our Sponsors

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## Welcoming Tom Silver, New CR&T President



CR&T's board of directors is proud to announce that Tom Silver will serve as the organization's President, effective January 2016. Tom, who returned to CR&T's board in 2013 after a two-year term in 2005 and 2006, has been instrumental in the redesign of our website ([www.crt.org](http://www.crt.org)), among other key projects.

Tom is Senior Vice President, Sales and Marketing for Leadership Directories, where he is responsible for managing all sales, marketing and customer service operations, including new business development and reseller channel expansion. He currently serves on the advisory board of Rally Bus, a crowd-powered travel site that delivers high-end buses to people going to same destination or event. He is also a member of the board of the Sigma Pi Educational Foundation Mu Chapter at Cornell University, which funds educational programs for chapter members.

Earlier in his career, Tom served as a member of the executive management team at Dice Holdings, Inc., a leading provider of career websites for professional communities. He is a graduate of Cornell University and holds an MBA from NYU's Stern School of Business.

Tom succeeds David Boule, who served as CR&T's President from 2014 to 2016. Under Dave's dedicated and capable leadership, the organization launched the most ambitious fund-raising initiative in its history, a multi-million-dollar campaign to expand research at the Richard T. Silver, MD Myeloproliferative Neoplasm Center at Weill Cornell Medical College. A retired managing partner at Ernst & Young, Dave will continue to serve on CR&T's board, focusing on financial operations, the International Patient Symposium on MPNs, and other important programs.

**We are deeply grateful to Dave for his continuing support, and look forward to working with Tom to take CR&T to the next level.**



### CR&T NEWS

#### Cancer Research & Treatment Fund, Inc. (CR&T)

500 E. 77th Street, Suite 1001  
New York, NY 10162  
Phone: 212-288-6604  
Fax: 212-288-7704  
Email: [brosenstein@crt.org](mailto:brosenstein@crt.org)  
[www.crt.org](http://www.crt.org)

### ABOUT CR&T

Since 1968, CR&T has funded the world's most promising physician-scientists, equipping them with the resources to advance the treatment of various types of blood cancers, including myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPNs), leukemia, non-Hodgkins lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and multiple myeloma, as well as other common cancers, such as breast and lung cancer.

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