

THE SILVER MPN CENTER: A YEAR OF PROGRESS

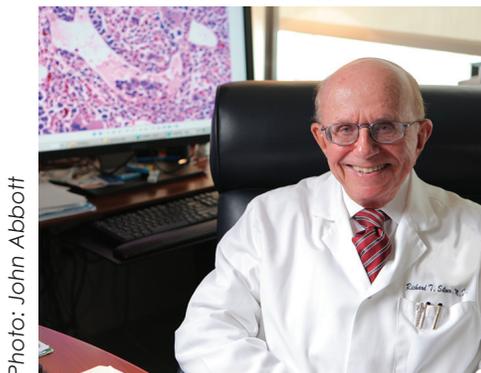
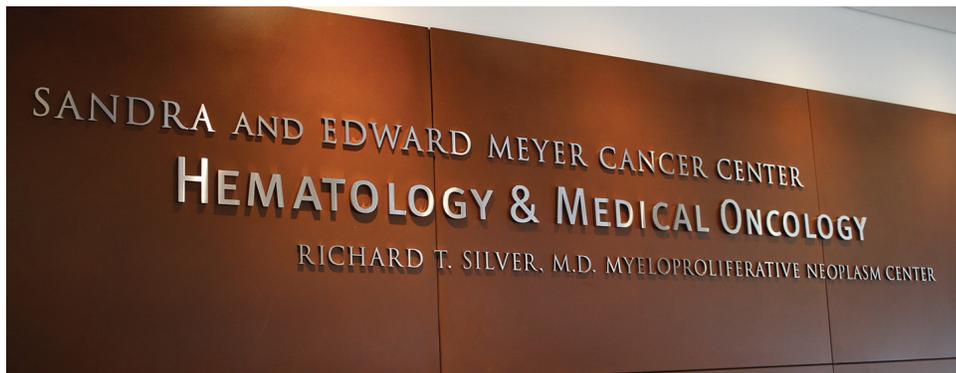


Photo: John Abbott

Dr. Richard T. Silver, the Center's namesake.



The cornerstone of CR&T's research strategy is our commitment to the Richard T. Silver, MD Myeloproliferative Neoplasm (MPN) Center at Weill Cornell Medical College. Thanks to the generosity of our donors and friends, CR&T is providing a multi-year, \$4.7 million grant to this translational research and treatment center, which was officially dedicated in February 2014. Our support is key to building a world-class center that focuses exclusively on these rare blood cancers, which can cause serious – and sometimes life-threatening – complications.

The CR&T grant enabled the Silver Center to recruit a distinguished researcher, Joseph Scandura, MD, PhD, to fill an important new position, Scientific Director. (For more about Dr. Scandura, who came on board in the fall of 2015, please see page 2.) Working in collaboration with the Director, Dr. Andrew I. Schafer, and Dr. Richard T. Silver, the Center's namesake and Director Emeritus, Dr. Scandura oversees basic and clinical research. He is also leading an ambitious effort to build the infrastructure that is essential for the Center's success: an extensive patient database; additional researchers who will conduct new studies; and support staff dedicated to managing the MPN database and clinical trials.

A Unique Approach to Cancer Care

People with MPNs are at risk for a wide range of complications, from itching, joint pain and gout to heart attack and stroke. Effective treatment demands a multi-disciplinary approach – the reason why the Silver Center is uniquely

positioned to be the leader in the care of these patients. In addition to benefiting from the experience of leading MPN experts, patients have ready access to prominent Weill Cornell specialists in cardiology, rheumatology, dermatology and other key fields.

As Dr. Scandura explains, this sets the Silver MPN Center apart from centers that are devoted solely to cancer care: "Free-standing cancer centers must refer patients to specialists at other institutions. In contrast, the Silver Center provides continuous, coordinated care for a large number of MPN patients. This integrated approach is also the springboard for new studies that will enable researchers and clinicians to better understand MPN complications and improve treatment."

Accelerating the Pace of MPN Research

The combination of outstanding talent and a highly efficient infrastructure has already borne fruit, and will lead to even greater progress during the year ahead:

Clinical Research – Shared research meetings and multi-disciplinary collaborations between Silver Center and other Weill Cornell investigators have been initiated. Two clinical trials using new therapeutic agents have opened during 2016, and initial discussions with several pharmaceutical companies have begun. Three other clinical studies, which probe the causes and management of MPN complications, have opened or are expected to open within the coming months.

The Silver Center is uniquely positioned to be the leader in the care of MPN patients.

To support these expanded efforts, CR&T funds have been used to create an MPN clinical research team focused on regulatory and data management at the Center. In addition, the Center is building a new clinical informatics infrastructure and database, which will enable investigators to collect, mine, and apply patient data in the most effective way possible. This powerful research tool should be complete in 2016. Finally, the Center has launched a website (www.weillcornell.org/silvermpncenter) and new outreach programs to build awareness of its programs and activities, and a plan is in place to further enhance its web presence during the coming year.

The quality and scope of these new resources should attract pharmaceutical/biotechnology companies, enabling Silver Center investigators to gain access to new therapies under study.

Translational Research – During the summer of 2016, a full-time post-doctoral researcher from the renowned Pasteur Institute in Paris will join the Scandura lab to study

CR&T's ongoing support provides seed money that allows the Center to test new ideas and theories.

MPN biology. The Center is also creating a new biorepository for MPN patient specimens. “CR&T’s ongoing support provides seed money that allows us to test new ideas and theories,” says Dr. Scandura. “It also enables us to recruit and retain essential staff and to build our infrastructure. This, in turn, attracts additional funding from other sources, who are drawn by the Center’s current capabilities and its growth potential.” Indeed, since his appointment as Scientific Director, Dr. Scandura has brought in an additional \$900,000 in grant funding to help support new and ongoing laboratory studies of MPN biology.

It is clear that, by the end of 2016, the Silver Center will have laid the foundation for a greatly expanded research program that answers key questions about the biology of MPNs and contributes to the development of new therapies. ***We are deeply grateful to you – our donors and friends – for your commitment to this life-changing initiative. Be sure to look for Silver Center progress reports in future issues of CR&T News and on our website, www.crt.org.***



ABOUT DR. JOSEPH SCANDURA

In October of 2015, Joseph Scandura, MD, PhD, was named Scientific Director of the Richard T. Silver, MD MPN Center at Weill Cornell Medicine. This appointment was made possible by support from CR&T.

Dr. Scandura, who also has appointments in the Divisions of Hematology-Oncology and Regenerative Medicine of the Department of Medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine, was highly qualified to assume this post. He has made major contributions to our understanding of hematopoietic stem cell biology, blood cancers and blood coagulation. He is a Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Scholar, and his research is funded by the National Institutes of Health, the National Cancer Institute and National Heart, Lung, Blood Institute, and by the Empire State Stem Cell Board (NYSTEM), the Starr Foundation Tri-Institutional Stem Cell Initiative, and the Taub Foundation, as well as by CR&T.

Dr. Scandura received a BS in Electrical Engineering from Cornell University and an MS in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Pennsylvania. He then completed combined MD/PhD training in Biochemistry at Temple University in 1997. Dr. Scandura was resident in internal medicine on the research track at Weill Cornell Medical College, New York Presbyterian Hospital and then completed a Fellowship in Medical Oncology at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC). In 2003, he joined the Leukemia Service at MSKCC, where he conducted laboratory research while serving as an inpatient attending physician and maintaining an outpatient clinic treating MPNs and other blood cancers. In 2006, Dr. Scandura was recruited to the Division of Hematology and Medical Oncology at Weill Cornell Medicine, where he leads a laboratory group studying blood formation and conducts clinical research to improve treatment of blood cancers. Dr. Scandura maintains an ambulatory clinic treating MPNs and other myeloid neoplasms and also serves as attending physician on the inpatient clinical services for the Division.

Dr. Scandura is part of an outstanding team of specialists at the Center, including Richard T. Silver, MD, CR&T's Vice President and Medical Director, and Andrew I. Schafer, MD, who serves on our Medical Advisory Board. To learn more about the Silver Center and its physicians, please visit www.weillcornell.org/silvermpncenter.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Summer is a season of simple pleasures – backyard barbecues and days at the beach with family and friends. But people whose lives have been touched by cancer know that even the simplest of pleasures is a gift – a gift made possible by breakthroughs in research. And it's the partnership between CR&T-funded investigators and caring donors like you that makes these breakthroughs possible.

For nearly half a century, CR&T has been dedicated to the discovery of new therapies and, ultimately, cures for many types of cancer, especially blood cancers. As we report in our cover story, in 2011, we took a great step forward – and made our largest research commitment ever – when we pledged \$3.7 million to provide for the start-up and operation of the Richard T. Silver, MD MPN Center. Thanks to your support, we have been able to increase this multi-year pledge to \$4.7 million. As you'll learn, the Center is well on its way to becoming an internationally respected hub for research and patient care.

This is the most recent of many achievements. Over the years, CR&T-funded investigators have:

- Conducted initial clinical studies leading to the FDA's approval of imatinib (Gleevec®), a revolutionary molecularly targeted drug used to treat chronic myeloid leukemia;
- Participated in the development of new therapies for Hodgkin's and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma;
- Contributed to the understanding of how and why breast cancers spread, and to the development of new treatments;
- Identified the processes of blood cell formation, which led to a new treatment for blood diseases and solid tumor cancers through angiogenesis;
- Discovered the molecular mechanism that causes some patients to be resistant to ibrutinib, an important drug

used to treat mantle cell leukemia; and

- Contributed to the use of interferon alfa and other biologics in treating myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPNs).

In addition, CR&T continues to invest in education and community outreach. At our biennial MPN Patient Symposium, which will be held in 2017, patients and family members learn about the latest developments from leading experts. Our support of an annual prostate cancer screening program in Jamaica, Queens helped underserved patients to access quality healthcare (see page 4).

As we commemorate our 48th year, I invite you to join us for three exciting events: our signature fundraising event, the Cancer Survivors Hall of Fame Dinner; "MPN for the Practitioner," a professional conference that welcomes patients and their families; and our first Halloween Bash, organized by our brand-new Young Professionals group. You'll find information about these events throughout this newsletter.

In closing, whether you are a longtime friend or have recently joined the CR&T family, I want to thank you for your support and your commitment to the community we serve. Together, we are building a future without cancer.

With sincere wishes to you and yours for a happy and healthy summer,



Thomas M. Silver
President



2016 HALLOWEEN BASH!

Hosted by CR&T Young Professionals

**JOIN US FOR A GREAT NIGHT
AND HELP FIGHT CANCER!**

Saturday, October 29

Open Bar and Live DJ

\$100 per person

Proper West
54 West 39th Street, New York City

Space is limited • Reservations required!

Dress Code: Costumes

For more information, please contact Barbara Rosenstein
at 212-288-6604 or brosenstein@crt.org

CR&T SUPPORTS PROSTATE CANCER SCREENING DAY AT QUEENS CHURCH



Rev. Patrick O'Connor (second from left) with volunteer medical staff

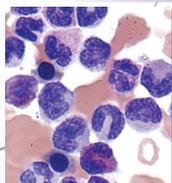
On April 2, CR&T marked our fifth year as a co-sponsor of the 13th Annual Prostate Screening and Health Fair at First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, Queens. Some 200 men attended the event, which offered free prostate, glucose, HIV and blood pressure screenings. Despite the gray, wet morning, the atmosphere was welcoming and reassuring. Attendees were invited to relax and enjoy music and complimentary refreshments.

Rev. Patrick O'Connor, the pastor of the historic church, and Dr. Douglas Scherr, Professor of Urology at Weill Cornell Medical College, are the organizers of the event. Every year, they are joined by dedicated volunteers from health centers and medical schools across New York City.

Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer, as well as the second leading cause of death from cancer, in American men. In communities like Jamaica, which has a significant African-American population, prostate cancer screening is especially important. According to the Prostate Cancer Foundation, African-American men are nearly 1.6 times more likely to be diagnosed with the disease than Caucasian men, and 2.4 times more likely to die from it. If caught early, however, prostate cancer is highly treatable.

“Over the past 13 years, this program has made a difference for hundreds of men and their families,” said Dr. Richard T. Silver, CR&T’s Vice President and Medical Director. “As an organization that is committed to finding new treatments and cures for cancer, we are proud to be a part of this critical initiative.”

For more information about First Presbyterian and its community health initiatives, visit www.firstchurchjamaica.org.



MYELOPROLIFERATIVE NEOPLASMS FOR THE PRACTITIONER: DIAGNOSIS, MANAGEMENT AND NEW CLINICAL DEVELOPMENTS

NOVEMBER 3-5, 2016 • BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

PROFESSIONAL MPN CONFERENCE WELCOMES PATIENTS

Patients and family members are cordially invited to attend this three-day professional education conference, which will focus on the practical aspects of the diagnosis and treatment of polycythemia vera (PV), essential thrombocythosis (ET), primary myelofibrosis (PMF), chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML), hypereosinophilia and systemic mastocytosis.

The world-class faculty is led by Drs. Richard T. Silver (New-York Presbyterian Weill Cornell Medical College) and Jerry L. Spivak (Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine).

Register before September 1 and take advantage of the early registration fee of \$149, plus an additional discount of \$50! Just select the "Fellow/Resident/PA/Nurse/Other" category and use coupon code **MPN50** at checkout. Hotel rooms are available at a discounted rate.

Learn more and register at www.mpnforthepractitioner2016.com

CR&T TO HONOR DR. NICHOLAS SARLIS

We are delighted to announce that Nicholas J. Sarlis, MD, PhD, will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award at CR&T's 2016 Cancer Survivors Hall of Fame Dinner, which will be held on November 15 at The Essex House in New York City. Dr. Sarlis is a distinguished cancer investigator and industry leader.

"CR&T presents the Lifetime Achievement Award to physician-scientists who have had a major impact on the field of cancer research," said Thomas Silver, CR&T's president. "Throughout his career, both as a researcher and as a pharmaceutical leader, Dr. Sarlis has been dedicated to developing new treatments that save and enhance cancer patients' lives." (To view a list of previous recipients of the award, please visit www.crt.org/Past-Hall-of-Fame-Honorees.)



Dr. Sarlis has a medical degree from the University of Athens, as well as doctorates in experimental pharmacology (Athens) and molecular endocrinology (Imperial College School of Medicine, University of London). After receiving his formal clinical training in internal medicine at the University of Utah Medical School, he specialized in endocrine oncology. Through clinical and basic research fellowships at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), he focused on the study of rare tumors of the glandular system. As a senior clinical investigator, Dr. Sarlis ran the NIH Thyroid Cancer program.

After eight years with the federal government, he became an associate professor at the University of Texas-MD Anderson Cancer Center, the world's largest cancer center. There, he continued to spearhead research and clinical care for endocrine tumors.

Dr. Sarlis then transitioned into the pharmaceutical industry. At Sanofi-Aventis, he was responsible for major programs of collaborative clinical and translational research that supported the late-stage development of anticancer therapies in gastric, head and neck, lung, and colorectal cancer in the U.S. He co-led collaborative research internationally aimed at finding effective and safe treatments for tumor lysis syndrome, a devastating and potentially lethal complication of anticancer therapy in both adult and pediatric patients with various aggressive leukemias and lymphomas.

Throughout his career, Dr. Sarlis has been dedicated to developing new treatments that save and enhance cancer patients' lives.

Nearly six years ago, Dr. Sarlis joined Incyte Corporation, a biopharmaceutical company based in Wilmington, DE, where he served as Vice President and Head of Global Medical Affairs, establishing the Medical Affairs function. In this role, he spearheaded multiple collaborations with key academic experts around the time of regulatory approval of the original Janus kinase (JAK) inhibitor, ruxolitinib, an innovative medicine used to treat myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPNs). He also fundamentally supported the successful market launch of this medicine, helping in major ways in educating a broad swath of hematologists and oncologists in its appropriate use in candidate patients. Currently, in addition to MPNs, Incyte's oncology research has a truly global scale and includes immuno-oncology therapies and agents that target the tumor micro-

environment, with a strong emphasis on innovative combination treatments.

Currently, Dr. Sarlis is an independent consultant to industry. He is an active member of several learned societies focusing on cancer and regularly attends meetings of various organizations and consortia. He has been elected Fellow of the American College of Physicians (FACP) and other physician groups. He also serves as an advisor or reviewer for international initiatives, including the Global Translational Medicine Consortium, and has authored or co-authored some 135 peer-reviewed publications and book chapters about cancer.

CR&T is proud to recognize Dr. Sarlis for his important contributions to the field of cancer research and treatment. For more information about our 2016 Cancer Survivors Hall of Fame Dinner, please see our back cover.

**2016
CANCER SURVIVORS
HALL OF FAME DINNER**



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2016
The Essex House
160 Central Park South
New York, NY

SAVE THE DATE!

Please join us for a very special evening honoring Dr. Nicholas Sarlis, a distinguished cancer investigator and industry leader, along with a celebrity who has fought a courageous battle against cancer (honoree to be announced soon).

You won't want to miss the opportunity to participate in our fabulous Silent Auction and Raffle! All proceeds from the dinner benefit CR&T's efforts to find a cure.

RSVP online at www.crt.org/Hall-of-Fame-Event, or contact Barbara Rosenstein at 212-288-6604 or brosenstein@crt.org.

We look forward to seeing you!



**CR&T NEWS
Cancer Research & Treatment
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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-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and multiple myeloma, as well as other common cancers, such as breast and lung cancer.

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