



Anne Moore, MD



## 2022 CANCER SURVIVOR HALL OF FAME HONOREES



Nick Vojnovic

On November 17, we will hold our annual Cancer Survivors Hall of Fame Dinner at New York City’s elegant Essex House. At this in-person event, we will come together to honor Dr. Anne Moore, an accomplished and beloved breast cancer expert, and restaurateur Nick Vojnovic, a community leader who has helped raise awareness of MPNs and the importance of bone marrow registries. We are proud to introduce you to our 2022 honorees.

**ANNE MOORE, MD**  
Professor of Clinical Medicine  
Weill Cornell Medicine, New York, NY  
*Outstanding Achievement in Cancer Care Award*

An internationally respected expert in the field of breast cancer, Dr. Anne Moore is a longtime member of CR&T’s Medical Advisory Board and the recipient of our 2010 Lifetime Achievement Award for her many contributions to breast cancer research and treatment. This year, we will honor Dr. Moore for her pioneering work as Director of the Breast Cancer Survivorship program at Weill Cornell Medicine.

Survivorship is a new and exciting field that provides medical care and emotional support for years after patients’ initial diagnosis. Its goal is to enable patients not only to survive, but to thrive. The concept was introduced in 1985, when Dr. Fitzhugh Mullan, a young physician and cancer survivor, published a groundbreaking article in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. Dr. Mullan identified three “seasons of survival”:

acute (initial diagnosis and treatment); extended time (a period of watchful waiting after the patient’s condition is stabilized); and permanent (remission/cure). Survivorship programs address the permanent season, when a person is cancer-free but may experience the fear of remission, complications resulting from treatment, and quality-of-life issues.

**Please join us on November 17!**  
**Learn more and register:**  
**[www.crt.org/Hall-of-Fame-Event](http://www.crt.org/Hall-of-Fame-Event)**

“Breast cancer has the largest population of survivors across the world,” Dr. Moore notes. “Because it is such a common cancer, and because advances in diagnosis and treatment have led to such excellent survival rates, it is the ‘poster child’ for survivorship.”

Under Dr. Moore’s leadership, the Weill Cornell program opened three years ago. Today, there are 1,000 participants whose average age is 50-59. Thanks to mammograms and the high quality of treatment, most patients were diagnosed early and are now 10-20 years out from their initial diagnosis.

Most breast cancer survivors live a long and healthy life after their diagnosis and treatment. The program provides access

to an annual visit that includes a thorough physical exam, education sessions, and consultation with an oncology dietician. Breast cancer survivors may struggle with anxiety and fear of recurrence. The Weill Cornell program offers a contemplative self-healing meditation program as well as yoga and individual counselling. The Survivorship program has generated significant research data, which has been presented at medical conferences. For example, research into the meditation program showed that it helped participants cope with their fear of recurrence as well as “brain fog,” a temporary issue reported by patients in the first months after treatment. In addition, the Survivorship program reported on the use of dietary supplements among Weill Cornell breast cancer survivors at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Conference, and this study was recently published.

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**NICK VOJNOVIC**  
**President, Little Greek Fresh Grill and Green Market Café**  
**Cancer Survivor Honoree**

Like all of his family, Nick Vojnovic is a high achiever. Born to Stevan and Lisa Vojnovic in the beautiful town of Corning, New York, Nick, along with his father, older brother Denny and younger brother Greg, is a Cornell University graduate. He is also a proud member of the Sigma Pi fraternity.

After graduating from Cornell’s School of Hotel Administration, Nick slowly worked his way up through the grueling restaurant industry. As President of Beef O’Brady’s, he helped grow the chain from 30 to 270 locations. After Beef’s was sold to a private equity firm in 2010, Nick took the opportunity to get his MBA at the University of South Florida. Since 2011, when he became President and majority partner of Little Greek Fresh Grill and Green Market Café, this high-quality, Tampa-based chain has quickly grown from four restaurants to 46 locations in six states. Nick’s industry honors include the 2019 Florida Restaurateur Hall of Fame award, the USF Entrepreneur of the Year award, and a Golden Chain award from the *Nation’s Restaurant News*. He has been featured in many publications, including the *Wall Street Journal*, and has become a regular on Fox Business with more than 10 appearances.

In 2016, Nick faced his greatest challenge: He was diagnosed with myelofibrosis, the most severe of the three blood cancers known as myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPNs). His doctors told him that without a stem cell transplant, he had between one and three years to live.

A stem cell transplant is the only cure for myelofibrosis. It puts a healthy donor’s blood-forming cells into the patient’s bone marrow, where the donor’s cells grow and make healthy blood cells. However, the patient and donor must carry specific genetic markers that are a close match, and family members aren’t always a match. For Nick, a search through Be the

A popular feature of the program is the annual in-person Survivorship Symposium, which enables patients to learn about the latest developments in research and treatment and to share their experiences with one another. “Some of the women in the program have had breast cancer 35 and even 40 years ago,” says Dr. Moore. “Our patients are very special and it’s very gratifying for us to see them come back year after year.”

Over the course of her distinguished career, Dr. Moore has received many honors, but none more important than the glowing testimonies of her patients. “I am a third-generation patient of Dr. Moore. She was also my mother and grandmother’s doctor,” one woman posted on the web. “Dr. Moore is my angel. They broke the mold with her.” Our special award recognizes Dr. Moore for her enduring impact on advances in the field and on the lives of breast cancer patients.

Match, a national bone marrow registry, found just one match out of 29 million people: Caroline Gomez, then a 22-year-old American University student. In 2017, Nick received his transplant – and a year later, Be the Match introduced Nick and Caroline at its annual meeting. Since then, Nick says, Caroline has become “part of the family. A second daughter.”

Today, Nick is healthy and is actively involved with the industry, his community, and his family. He and his wife, Rene, live in St. Petersburg. Their family includes son Jon and his wife Brittany, parents of Evelyn, their sweet two-year-old granddaughter, and “Granddog #1” Winston; and daughter Lauren, her husband Zach Moser, and “Granddog #2,” Chance. Nick’s MPN journey has made him a strong advocate for clinical trials, support groups, and education programs that help patients cope and offer hope for new treatments and cures.

Nick serves on the Executive Advisory Board for the USF College of Business and is on the board for Big Brothers/Big Sisters in Hillsborough County. In addition to CR&T and Be the Match, his many charity partnerships include Autism Speaks; Strivin’ for Stephen; the Paralympic Executive Board of the National Wheelchair Basketball Association; Real Men Wear Pink; Florida College for the Deaf; St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital; and the American Diabetes Association. He also serves as a board member for five start-up restaurant companies; has been chairman, board member and Hillsborough County Chapter President for the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association; and has served on the Technomic Advisory Board and the National Restaurant Association Fast Casual Executive Board.

For his philanthropy and commitment to raising awareness of the MPNs and the importance of national bone marrow registries, CR&T is proud to present our 2022 Cancer Survivor award to Nick Vojnovic.

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



On November 17 – for the first time since 2019 – we will open the doors of the historic Essex House ballroom to our friends and supporters. On that night, we will come together for our Cancer Survivors Hall of Fame Dinner, a CR&T tradition. We will celebrate the accomplishments of our honorees, Dr. Anne Moore and Nick Vojnovic, look back on the achievements of the past 54 years, and look forward to the advances to come.

The evening will be an opportunity to thank friends like you for your steadfast support during the past two years. Because of you, CR&T has been able to continue its important work throughout the pandemic. Over the past year, CR&T-funded researchers at Weill Cornell's Richard T. Silver, MD Myeloproliferative Neoplasm (MPN) Center have been more productive than ever. Six of their studies – a record number – were featured at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Hematology in December, 2021. Throughout the first half of 2022, their work has been published or accepted for publication in major scientific journals. Their extensive, years-long study of polycythemia vera has been a source of key insights into this blood cancer. To give just one example, the Silver Center team has been instrumental in demonstrating the importance of interferon as a treatment for polycythemia vera (page 5).

For the scientific community, in-person meetings promote collegiality and the productive exchange of ideas in a way that virtual meetings cannot match. The 14th International Congress on MPNs, which will be held in Brooklyn from

October 27-28, will bring together medical professionals from around the world. Organized by Melton Medical Education, this annual conference is co-chaired by two members of CR&T's Medical Advisory Board, Drs. Richard Silver and Jerry Spivak, and Silver Center experts are among the speakers. The program features presentations from more than 20 world-renowned experts covering the latest scientific, clinical and therapeutic developments in the rapidly evolving MPN field.

We are grateful to Melton for opening the program to patients and their families and providing a special discount on registration (see back cover). While we decided not to hold our International Patient Symposium this fall due to COVID concerns, the Congress offers an excellent educational opportunity for patients. Those who are unable to attend in person, will have complimentary access to recorded presentations after the program ends.

Finally, Barbara Rosenstein, our dedicated and extremely competent Director of Administration and Development, has decided to retire to pursue a more relaxing lifestyle. The officers and board of directors of CR&T thank her for her seven years of dedicated service. She will remain a member of the CR&T family, consulting and filling in where necessary.

We are happy to introduce Chad Feay, who will succeed Barbara in July. Chad brings invaluable experience to CR&T (see below), and we know you will join us in welcoming him to CR&T.

Again, thank you for staying the course with us during these difficult times. We look forward to celebrating better times and new advances with you in the year ahead.

Thomas M. Silver, *President*

## MEET OUR NEW DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

CR&T is pleased to announce Chad Feay, MA, CHES, as its new Director of Administration and Development. Chad succeeds Barbara Rosenstein, who is retiring after serving as our Director for the past seven years.

Chad has lived internationally and nationally, most recently in Indiana where he earned his BA from Indiana University and served as Executive Director of Hemophilia of Indiana, a state-wide organization focused on education and advocacy for people with bleeding disorders. Chad moved to New York City 12 years ago to expand his work in bleeding disorders at the National Hemophilia Foundation.



After earning his master's degree in Health Education and Promotion at Lehman College - CUNY, Chad ventured into the clinical side of health care at Montefiore Medical Group as a Certified Health Education Specialist, working closely with patients and providers to improve health behavior and lifestyle. Chad also teaches healthcare related undergraduate courses at Lehman College - CUNY.

Chad comes to CR&T with more than 20 years of healthcare nonprofit management experience and is excited about working closely with esteemed members of the medical community to continue CR&T's mission of funding cutting-edge blood and other cancer research.

## REMEMBERING DOUGLAS W. McCORMICK



Doug McCormick with his wife, Kasia

We are deeply saddened by the loss of Douglas W. McCormick, our former President and longtime board member, who passed away on May 9. Doug fought a courageous 17-year battle with liposarcoma, a rare cancer. Together with his beloved wife, Kasia, who also serves on our board of directors, Doug was committed to advancing new treatments and cures for cancer long before he was personally affected by the disease. At our 2003 Cancer Survivors Hall of Fame Dinner, he received our Humanitarian Award for his philanthropy and service to CR&T and many other organizations, including the Pelzman Foundation for Healthcare Innovation and Big Brothers and Big Sisters of New York. His honors include the National Women's Political Caucus's "Good Guy" award and the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

Doug had an extraordinary career. An early player in the cable industry, he was inducted into the Cable Pioneers' Hall of Fame. He was the CEO of Lifetime TV Networks and conceived and launched the Lifetime Movie Network. Before joining Rho Capital Partners in 2006, he was also the Chairman and CEO of iVillage, LIN Media, and Everyday Health Inc. In addition to his business accomplishments, Doug was a talented songwriter whose work was recorded by such stars as Dusty Springfield, Gladys Knight, Paul Anka, and Roberto Carlos.

Doug's dedication to CR&T's mission leaves a lasting legacy that will benefit generations of cancer patients and their families. Our heartfelt condolences go to Kasia and their family.

## CR&T SUPPORTS PROSTATE CANCER SCREENING DAY

Since 2011, CR&T has been proud to co-sponsor the Annual Prostate Screening and Health Fair, held at First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, Queens. Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed nonskin cancer in America. If detected early, the disease has over a 90 percent survival rate. On April 30, after a two-year hiatus caused by the pandemic, 115 men were able to receive free prostate cancer screenings.

The event is conducted by the church in collaboration with Douglas Scherr, MD, professor of urology and clinical director of urologic oncology at Weill Cornell Medicine. The health fair offers many other free tests for men and women, including HIV, blood pressure, diabetes, and cholesterol exams, as well as dental screening and nutritional counseling. Events like this one play a crucial role by providing preventive services to underserved communities.



L-R: Dr. Douglas Scherr, Rev. Patrick O'Connor, pastor of First Presbyterian Church, and volunteers

For more information about First Presbyterian Church and its community initiatives, please visit [www.firstchurchjamaica.org](http://www.firstchurchjamaica.org).

# CR&T's ROLE IN INTERFERON AND POLYCYTHEMIA VERA

In November 2021, the FDA approved Besremi (ropeginterferon alfa-2b-njft), the first interferon therapy for the treatment of polycythemia vera (PV), one of the blood cancers known as myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPNs). PV causes the bone marrow to make too many red blood cells and, in some cases, white blood cells and platelets. The road to the recognition of interferon as an important PV treatment has been a long one, and CR&T and its founder, Richard T. Silver, MD, have played a key role in reaching this goal.

## The Discovery of Interferon

Interferon was discovered in 1957, and several types of interferons were identified in the decades that followed. Interferons are cytokines, proteins that are naturally produced by the immune system. Every cytokine has a specific function in the body's immune response. The interferons, which help fight infections and tumors, were among the first cytokines to be cloned in the laboratory, which enabled investigators to explore their therapeutic potential. Today, they are used to treat numerous diseases, including hepatitis, lymphoma, and melanoma.

## Interferon Research at Weill Cornell Medicine

In 1988, Dr. Silver, a prominent physician-researcher, published the initial report on the use of recombinant (genetically modified) interferon in PV, the first of many studies on the drug conducted at Weill Cornell Medicine (WCM). At the time, few hematologists supported the use of interferon in PV, but Dr. Silver and his colleagues believed that the drug could be highly beneficial to patients.

The overproduction of red blood cells in PV causes patients' blood to become too thick, leading to thrombosis (blood clots) and increasing the risk of heart attacks and stroke. To thin the blood, the standard treatments have been phlebotomy (bloodletting) and hydroxyurea, a chemo drug. But interferon is the only therapy that affects the growth and development of stem cells. In PV, this leads to the cessation of blood cell production, especially red blood cells. This stops PV from progressing to myelofibrosis, a more severe MPN that causes scarring of the bone marrow. It also reduces the risk of iron deficiency, which phlebotomy-only can cause in many patients. Finally, interferon does not lead to secondary leukemias, which long-term use of hydroxyurea may cause.

**CR&T-funded studies at WCM's Silver MPN Center have produced a wealth of valuable information about PV symptoms, complications, and treatments.**

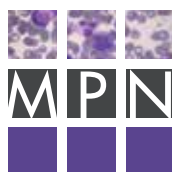
As previously reported in *CR&T News*, recent CR&T-funded studies at WCM's Silver MPN Center have produced a wealth of valuable information about PV symptoms, complications, and treatments. In addition, Dr. Andrew Schafer has written extensively about thrombosis complications, and Dr. Ellen Ritchie has reported on new drug trials. Using sophisticated artificial intelligence techniques, the Silver Center PV research team, including Drs. Ghaith Abu-Zeinah, Joseph M. Scandura, and Silver, along with Dr. Khalid Abu-Zeinah of the University of Cambridge, has analyzed thousands of datapoints in 470 patients. Key findings about interferon include:

- The first study to show that interferon is more effective than standard treatments in prolonging survival and preventing PV from progressing to myelofibrosis. (*Blood*, 2020)
- A study showing that early intervention with interferon, together with close monitoring to prevent serious complications, enables patients to have a lifespan that approaches normal compared to the U.S. population overall (*Leukemia*, 2021). WCM investigators believe that this approach explains why the average survival of PV patients treated at the Silver MPN Center is 28 years, compared to 15 years at other institutions.
- A related study showing that early intervention with interferon can prolong the lives of patients younger than age 60. Because this group was previously thought to be low risk, doctors would use a "watch and wait" approach or treat them with aspirin and phlebotomy (*Leukemia & Lymphoma*, 2022).

Like all powerful drugs, Besremi, which is given by injection, has the potential for toxicity. But with proper dosages and careful monitoring, interferon is a highly effective treatment for PV. Since its approval in Europe in 2019 and in the U.S. last fall, hematologists worldwide are administering the drug in greater numbers.

CR&T is proud of its role in interferon research. We are grateful to the David L. Johns Family, The Applebaum Foundation, and to all of our donors for their longstanding support of CR&T-funded PV research.

Patients and families are welcome to attend the



14th International Congress on  
**Myeloproliferative Neoplasms**

Oct. 27-28, 2022 ■ Brooklyn, New York



To learn more or register, visit [www.MPNCongress22.com](http://www.MPNCongress22.com).  
Use coupon code "PTSAVE100" to receive \$100 off your registration fee.



Cancer Research & Treatment Fund, Inc.  
Established 1968

**CR&T NEWS**

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

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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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