

## **Two Scientists Named to Receive Inaugural Lustgarten Foundation-AACR Career Development Awards for Pancreatic Cancer Research in Honor of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and John Robert Lewis**

PHILADELPHIA – Dannielle Engle, PhD, of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, and Avery D. Posey, PhD, of the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, have been announced at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Annual Meeting 2021 as the inaugural recipients of the Lustgarten Foundation-AACR Career Development Awards for Pancreatic Cancer Research in Honor of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and John Robert Lewis.

Each award consists of a three-year, \$300,000 grant supporting the Lustgarten Foundation-AACR mission to cure pancreatic cancer by funding meritorious basic, translational, and clinical research. Through these awards, the Lustgarten Foundation and the AACR seek to help close the gap in the number of early-career women and underrepresented scientists applying for and receiving funding to conduct research that may lead to a better understanding and treatment of pancreatic cancer.

“These awards will encourage and support early-career scientists engaged in pancreatic cancer research and address the ongoing need to advance gender equality and racial diversity within the pancreatic cancer research community,” said David Tuveson, MD, PhD, incoming president of the AACR, chief scientist of the Lustgarten Foundation, and director of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Cancer Center.

Each year, more than 45,000 American lives are lost to pancreatic cancer—now the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths with a five-year relative survival rate of 10 percent.

The awards honor the extraordinary lives and legacies of United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and civil rights icon and 17-term Georgia Congressman John Robert Lewis, two influential and inspiring public figures who died of pancreatic cancer in 2020. The award named for Justice Ginsburg supports the career advancement of an early-career female pancreatic cancer researcher, while the award named for Congressman Lewis supports the career advancement of an early-career pancreatic cancer researcher from an underrepresented minority group.

“Pancreatic cancer is a uniquely challenging disease, requiring bold and innovative science,” said Linda Tantawi, CEO of the Lustgarten Foundation, which has committed up to \$1.8 million to the program over the next three years. “We know these challenges are even greater for Blacks and African Americans, who experience both higher incidence and death rates than other populations. What we don’t know is why. Congressman John Lewis was a bold and innovative leader who never backed away from a challenge, including pancreatic cancer. Honoring his legacy through this grant is a step toward both the deeper understanding of pancreatic cancer among Blacks and African Americans and closing the gap of diversity within the research community.

“Similarly, we honor Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s tireless fight for equality by supporting women researchers within the pancreatic cancer field. Their work will not only reverberate across the pancreatic cancer community of patients, physicians and researchers; but they also will serve as the necessary role models and mentors to attract even more women into the field.”

Engle is an assistant professor in the Regulatory Biology Laboratory at the Salk Institute. Her project is titled “The role of CA19-9 in pancreatic cancer progression and metastasis.”

Posey is an assistant professor of pharmacology at the University of Pennsylvania. His project is titled “The Role of Tn Antigen in Pancreatic Cancer: Driver, Suppressor, and Target.”

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### **About the American Association for Cancer Research**

Founded in 1907, the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) is the world's first and largest professional organization dedicated to advancing cancer research and its mission to prevent and cure cancer. AACR membership includes 48,000 laboratory, translational, and clinical researchers; population scientists; other health care professionals; and patient advocates residing in 127 countries. The AACR marshals the full spectrum of expertise of the cancer community to accelerate progress in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer by annually convening more than 30 conferences and educational workshops—the largest of which is the AACR Annual Meeting, with more than 74,000 attendees for the 2020 virtual meetings and more than 22,500 attendees for past in-person meetings. In addition, the AACR publishes nine prestigious, peer-reviewed scientific journals and a magazine for cancer survivors, patients, and their caregivers. The AACR funds meritorious research directly as well as in cooperation with numerous cancer organizations. As the Scientific Partner of Stand Up To Cancer, the AACR provides expert peer review, grants administration, and scientific oversight of team science and individual investigator grants in cancer research that have the potential for near-term patient benefit. The AACR actively communicates with legislators and other policymakers about the value of cancer research and related biomedical science in saving lives from cancer. For more information about the AACR, visit [www.AACR.org](http://www.AACR.org).

### **About Lustgarten Foundation**

Lustgarten Foundation is the largest private funder of pancreatic cancer research in the world. Based in Woodbury, N.Y., the Foundation's mission is to cure pancreatic cancer by funding scientific and clinical research related to the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of pancreatic cancer; providing research information and clinical support services to patients, caregivers and individuals at high risk; and increasing public awareness and hope for those dealing with this disease. Since its inception, the Lustgarten Foundation has directed more than \$200 million to research and has assembled the best scientific minds with the hope that one day, a cure can be found. Thanks to separate funding to support administrative expenses, 100% of donations fund lifesaving pancreatic cancer research. For more information, visit [lustgarten.org](http://lustgarten.org).

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