

# LUSTGARTEN FOUNDATION

PANCREATIC CANCER RESEARCH

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **The Lustgarten Foundation Announces Recipients of Career Development Awards for Pancreatic Cancer Research in Honor of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and John Robert Lewis**

WOODBURY, NY – Pingping Hou, PhD, of Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and Edwin Manuel, PhD, of the City of Hope, were announced at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Annual Meeting 2022 as the latest recipients of the Lustgarten Foundation-AACR Career Development Awards for Pancreatic Cancer Research in Honor of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and John Robert Lewis.

Career scientists, Dr. Hou and Dr. Manuel received separate three-year, \$300,000 grants to fund research furthering the understanding of pancreas cancer. The Lustgarten Foundation has committed up to \$1.8 million to the program over the next two years and is committed to ensuring equity, diversity and inclusion across Lustgarten-funded research and the scientists we support. The awards are administered by AACR.

Dr. Hou is a Researcher in the Clinical Investigations and Precisions Therapeutics Program at Rutgers Cancer Institute and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Microbiology, Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. The Career Development grant will fund her work examining an immune cell population called *tumor associated macrophages* (TAMs) that have been shown to cause resistance in a therapy targeting KRAS, a key driver of PDAC. Her project is titled “Anti-KRAS therapy resistance and pancreatic tumor immune microenvironment.”

Dr. Manuel is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Immuno-Oncology at the Beckman Research Institute of City of Hope, a cancer research and treatment organization in California. Dr. Manuel and his team are focused on developing novel therapies to suppress nutrient uptake by cancer cells, an important process that drives progression and resistance in pancreatic tumors. His project is titled “Targeting Macropinocytosis as a Novel Avenue for Pancreatic Cancer Therapy.”

Lustgarten CEO Linda Tantawi said, “The early career development program is one of several initiatives we created to advance gender equality and racial diversity within the pancreatic cancer research community, as we continue accelerating progress toward transforming pancreatic cancer into a curable disease. As the world’s largest private funder of pancreatic cancer research, the Lustgarten Foundation is uniquely positioned to, once again, dramatically shift the pancreatic cancer research landscape.”

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“When I entered the field 20 years ago, no one knew anything about this disease,” said David Tuveson, MD, PhD, outgoing president of AACR, Chief Scientist of the Lustgarten Foundation, and Director of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Cancer Center. “I had nobody to talk to, nothing to read to learn about it, just things to think about. Lustgarten essentially started the field by generating excitement about it and encouraging scientists to work on pancreas cancer. Now, we are using that influence to help close the gap in the rates of early-career women and underrepresented scientists applying for and receiving funding.”

Each year, nearly 50,000 American lives are lost to pancreatic cancer—now the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths with a five-year relative survival rate of 11%.

The Career Development 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.

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*We gratefully acknowledge Jeannette & Stephen Kordiak for supporting the 2022 Lustgarten Foundation AACR Career Development Award for Pancreatic Cancer Research in honor of Ruth Bader Ginsburg.*

**About Lustgarten Foundation**

The Lustgarten Foundation funds the world's preeminent pancreatic cancer researchers, driving the pursuit of bold and innovative science toward earlier detection, better treatments and transforming pancreatic cancer into a curable disease. The Foundation is a catalyst—Lustgarten-funded science has been a driving force in every major advancement in pancreatic cancer research since 1998. We believe time is everything for pancreatic cancer patients and their families, so we fund research where creative risks yield high rewards to accelerate and expand life-saving treatment options. And we believe in the power of community. Lustgarten programs and events provide people affected by pancreatic cancer a voice and a place to create hope, together. The Lustgarten Foundation is the world's largest private funder of pancreatic cancer research and 100% of all donations fuel the research to advance understanding of this complex, devastating and historically underfunded cancer. For more information, visit [lustgarten.org](https://lustgarten.org).

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