LUSTGARTEN FOUNDATION
PANCREATIC CANCER RESEARCH

Lustgarten Foundation Receives $424,000 Grant Establishing the Gail V. Coleman and Kenneth M. Bruntel Organoids for Personalized Therapy Project

Devastated by the loss of her husband Kenneth Bruntel to pancreatic cancer, Gail Coleman is laser-focused on funding research offering hope and better treatment options for patients with metastatic cancer. Coleman knows the devastation of a pancreatic cancer diagnosis all too well, having also lost her 66-year-old mother followed by her 80-year-old father to the disease. Pancreatic cancer is considered a rare disease; that Coleman lost three of the people most precious to her to this cancer is wrenching.

"I was very upset to learn there were *still* no good treatments for people with stage four pancreatic cancer when Ken was diagnosed," Coleman said. "After Ken died, I spent a lot of time educating myself about pancreatic cancer research and decided to use Ken's retirement fund to help advance this research. I concluded that *translational research*—which moves research from the laboratory to the clinic—offers the best chance for giving future patients some meaningful time after diagnosis. It also was important to me to invest in a project where our gift could make the most impact."

Coleman identified the Lustgarten Foundation's Organoids for Personalized Therapy (OPT) project as a perfect match for her priorities. She had heard about organoids—a 3D model of an individual patient's tumor—and was excited about the opportunity to fund a project that would further their application in treating pancreatic cancer patients. The initial stage of the OPT study successfully demonstrated the feasibility of the organoid precision medicine platform for pancreatic cancer—showing organoids can be generated in the lab from pancreatic tumor cells and then used to determine the tumor's sensitivity to various drugs.

The next step in the OPT project brings the science into the clinic. Funded in part by a $424,000 gift establishing the **Gail V. Coleman and Kenneth M. Bruntel Organoids for Personalized Therapy Grant**, organoid analysis has been included in an upcoming clinical trial to determine if the organoid response to drugs in the lab can accurately predict which chemotherapy will be most effective for each patient.

"This trial is an important step forward," said Andrew Rakeman, PhD, Vice President of Research at the Lustgarten Foundation. "Gail understands the urgency of families facing a pancreatic cancer diagnosis, as well as that of the scientists working toward breakthroughs in available treatments. This grant allows us to bring the proven power of organoids from the labs to clinic much faster."

Organoids have previously proven useful in the lab to understand the biology of human tumors. Under the direction of David Tuveson, MD, PhD, Chief Scientist and Director of the Lustgarten Foundation Pancreatic Cancer Research Laboratory at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, researchers have pushed pancreatic cancer organoids even further, exploring their potential in personalized medicine—matching the right therapy to each patient—as well as discovering and developing new therapies.

In the upcoming clinical trial, organoids will be created from patients diagnosed with metastatic pancreatic cancer and tested against the patient's treatment plan. Patients will be randomized to

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receive one of the two standard-of-care treatments (FOLFIRINOX or Gemcitabine/nabpaclitaxel) and their tumor's response to treatment compared to the response of the organoid. The study is the first to compare the two drug regimens head-to-head. Data from the organoids will help determine if doctors can use this approach to successfully predict the best treatment for patients.

"When Ken was diagnosed, I immediately thought of Patrick Swayze, who seemed to be doing so well on a clinical trial," Coleman said. "So, we enrolled in one, hoping it would buy us some time. Ken thought if he could make it to Christmas, he had a chance, but he died before ever receiving the first experimental dose in the clinical trial. Ken didn't usually enjoy being the center of attention, but he let us throw a big 60th birthday celebration that was filled with friends and colleagues whose lives he had touched. He was thrilled."

"What excites me the most about the project is that Ken can continue to positively impact the lives of others. I believe this study will be an important step in personalized therapy, matching new or different therapies to the tumor characteristics of future pancreatic cancer patients. If this prolongs the lives of patients with metastatic cancer, that will be our legacy," she added.

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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 www.lustgarten.org.

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