

Lustgarten Foundation Receives \$550,000 grant towards next phase of Organoids for Personalized Therapy (OPT) Project



From devastation to dedication, Gail Coleman is committed to supporting personalized medicine in pancreatic cancer research

WOODBURY, NY, February 14, 2024 – Gail Coleman, a nine-year supporter of the Lustgarten Foundation, has generously committed a three-year gift totaling \$550,000 to support the Organoids for Personalized Therapy (OPT) Project at the [LABS \(Lustgarten Advancing Breakthrough Science\)](#) site at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. Ms. Coleman's unwavering commitment to advancing pancreatic cancer research is deeply rooted, having lost three cherished loved ones to the disease.

“The impact a pancreatic cancer diagnosis has on a family is profound,” said Linda Tantawi, CEO of the Lustgarten Foundation. “Even though it’s exceptionally difficult to diagnose and treat we are seeing more life-saving progress in the field each year, fueled by motivated supporters like Gail.”

From devastation...

Gail Coleman is all too familiar with pancreatic cancer, having lost both parents, Jane Valentine and Edward Coleman, to the disease. But when her beloved husband and partner of 35 years, Kenneth Bruntel, was diagnosed in 2009, she was absolutely devastated -- “I was very upset to learn there were still no good treatments for people with stage four pancreatic cancer when Ken was diagnosed,” said Gail. She began doing research on how money inherited from Ken might be used to advance treatment 15 years after Ken’s death; she remains a passionate supporter of pancreatic cancer research, investing in the most promising projects, “where our gift could make the most impact.”



To dedication...

After extensive research, Gail decided to invest in the Organoids for Personalized Therapy (OPT) Project led by Lustgarten Foundation Chief Scientist David Tuveson, MD, PhD. Tuveson’s lab focuses on designing new models of pancreatic cancer and discovering novel therapeutic and diagnostic targets to bring new options to patients more rapidly. [Organoids](#), or microscopic “copies” of an individual patient’s tumor, allow researchers to closely observe the behavior of pancreatic cancer and conduct repeated

evaluations of therapies in controlled laboratory environments. Building upon the successes of previous phases, OPT-4 marks a pivotal step forward, focusing on early detection strategies and drug screening methodologies to enhance personalized treatment approaches for patients with advanced pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (PDAC).

“The depth of insight provided by the OPT Project is unparalleled,” said Andrew Rakeman, Vice President of Research at the Lustgarten Foundation. “As our understanding of pancreatic cancer biology deepens, so does our ability to effectively combat it. Time is of the essence for pancreatic cancer patients, and the strategic targeting made possible by projects like OPT is paramount. The steadfast support of donors like Gail is profoundly impactful and paves the way for groundbreaking advancements in pancreatic cancer treatment.”



Since 2020, Gail has donated \$974,000 to the Lustgarten Foundation to support the OPT Project, with hopes that breakthroughs are on the horizon for pancreatic cancer patients and their loved ones.

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