

# REPORT

Spring 2008

## What If You Are Diagnosed With Prostate Cancer?

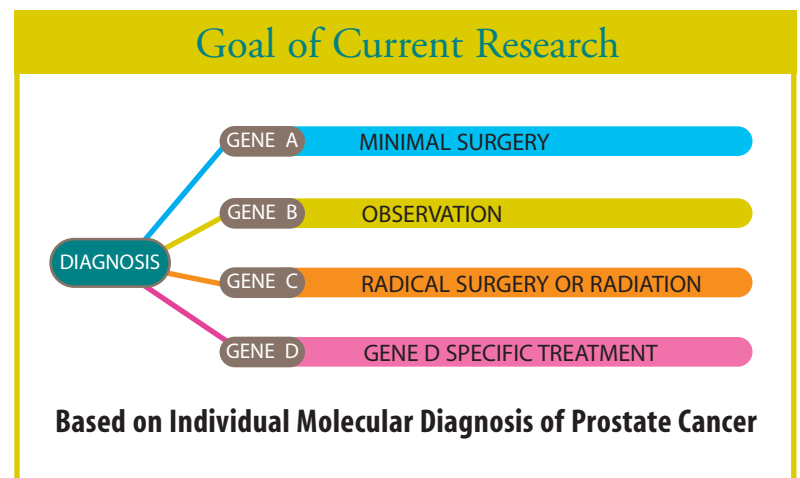
*SWCRF funds research to identify most effective individual prostate cancer treatment*

**N**elson Mandela, Robert DeNiro, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf and Sidney Poitier, like two million other men, have survived prostate cancer and are alive today. Still, about 27,000 men did die of it in 2007, according to the American Cancer Society, so early diagnosis is important.

Starting at age 50, or earlier if there is a history of reproductive cancer in the family, many men are screened for prostate cancer with a blood test to measure their PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen), and a Digital Rectal Exam. Last year close to 219,000 men were diagnosed with this cancer, which is terminal for some, but is often curable with surgery, radiation and drug therapy.

The question is how to treat this disease most effectively and appropriately. Recently the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality surveyed the most common treatments and came to a frustrating and startling conclusion: it could not recommend one treatment as working better than any other.

"We're making progress with this cancer, but there are dilemmas that continue to plague us," says Dr. Sam Waxman. "There are treatments – surgery, radiation



and hormonal therapy. We just don't know which is best. It's hoped that one day we'll be able to tailor the treatment to the prostate cancer in each individual."

While a great deal of research is being done on prostate cancer and more is learned every day, much is still unknown.

"Anything we can learn that will give us targets to treat with new approaches that are more specific to the development of this cancer would be important," says Dr. Waxman. "Very sensitive tests might help us understand what to do medically at a very early stage and to avoid unnecessary drastic therapies."

### Identifying Each Man's Right Treatment

More information about the specific characteristics of an individual's cancer enables the doctor to prescribe the most effectively targeted treatment. With an SWCRF Program Grant, Charles L. Sawyers, of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center is collaborating with SWCRF scientists at UCLA and Dana-Farber Cancer

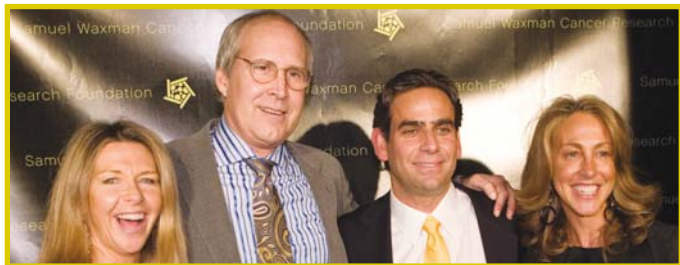
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# 10th Annual SWCRF Gala

The 10th annual gala attracted more guests (1,200) and more money (\$5.7 million including a \$1 million Skirball grant and the \$1 million needed to match it) than ever before. Showcased on stage were Chevy Chase as MC, Hugh Hildesley of Sotheby's auctioning off prizes like an hour on the court with Andre Agassi, and Mark Fizulich, whose memory will serve as an inspiration to all of us. The evening featured a rare musical performance by the Eagles' Glenn Frey and Joe Walsh, followed by a rocking after party with the Lost Trailers. The evening was a powerful display of the energy and commitment of our supporters as collaborative partners in the search for a cure.



Jayni and Chevy Chase, Michael and Elin Nierenberg



Merle Kailas, Dr. Samuel Waxman, Craig Overlander



Gary Gladstein and Cynthia Temple



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Dena Weiner, Marion Waxman, Dr. Samuel Waxman, Hugh Hildesley, Dr. Jonathan Licht



Adrienne Landau, Patricia Duff, Coppy Holzman and friend



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Photos by Rebecca Weiss;  
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# From the Chairman



**Michael Nierenberg**  
Chairman of the Board

We hardly remember that 25 years ago any Westerner in China was accompanied by a government "minder". Caucasians were so unusual that astonished Chinese children might follow them around.

The collaboration that was established between SWCRF and the new Shanghai Institute of Hematology was truly groundbreaking. Combining the best of the West with the best of the East, this unprecedented partnership has revolutionized the treatment of acute promyelocytic leukemia (APL). Further, in highlighting the potential value of arsenic in combating cancer, the team stimulated broader research into other cancer-fighting applications of this Traditional Chinese Medicine.

This is an inspiring illustration of what distinguishes SWCRF:

- its focus on the cutting edge specialty of understanding and correcting the control systems that direct cell behavior (differentiation and epigenetic therapies) and
- its commitment to collaboration and exchange of information among world class scientists.

Thank you for your past support, which made possible the research which led to conquering APL. With your ongoing support, we can continue to develop new collaborations and to take the lead in realizing the potential of differentiation and epigenetic therapy to cure cancer. Your support is critical. An envelope is enclosed or you can donate at [www.waxmancancer.org](http://www.waxmancancer.org). *—Michael Nierenberg*

*In loving memory of*

**Mark Fizulich**

**1975-2008**

*We mourn the loss of a heroic young man with a passion for life that inspired devotion from so many.*

## SWCRF Supports Exciting Research in Israel

*"Seed Money" enables scientists to apply novel ideas to cancer treatment*

**T**he SWCRF is enabling me to apply my earlier research to the task of correcting cell malfunctions caused by mutated P53, one of the mutated genes most commonly found in different types of cancer," says Dr. Yosef Shaul, head of the Department of Molecular Genetics at the Weizmann Institute of Science. "Waxman is crucial to pursuing this kind of new idea that doesn't require all the preliminary research to be proven already."

Dr. Shaul is investigating the effect of a drug he has developed to restore the proper function of P53. This groundbreaking work may lead to a targeted therapy for many types of cancer.

**"Waxman is crucial to pursuing this kind of new idea that doesn't require all the preliminary research to be proven already"**

Dr. Shai Izraeli, head of Pediatric Hematology Research at Sheba Medical Center, was introduced to SWCRF several years ago by Michael Feinstein, a former board member. He is using SWCRF funding to pursue research into the molecular basis of acute leukemia associated with Down syndrome. SWCRF has been instrumental in the expansion of Dr. Izraeli's research program, which is also studying the one of the most mutated genes in prostate cancer.

SWCRF stands out because of our willingness to fund high potential innovative research. We value and require contact and sharing among participating scientists.

SWCRF insists on sharing of information among participants in the *Institute Without Walls*. Drs. Shaul and Izraeli, both at institutions near Tel Aviv, had heard of each other, but actually met through SWCRF.

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# What If You Are Diagnosed With Prostate Cancer?

*(continued from cover)*

Institute in work that may lead to just such a test to detect two particular prostate cancer gene mutations, called MYC and PTEN. "You would treat a PTEN tumor differently than a MYC tumor," says Dr. Sawyers. Though there are drugs in development to treat PTEN tumors, specific treatments for MYC tumors have yet to be found. "If you're going to test a drug that's going to work against PTEN tumors, you'd want to put PTEN patients on it. Right now we have to put all patients on the same drugs."

Dr. Sawyers' lab has managed to create exactly the same two gene abnormalities in mice, which develop prostate cancer. "What's nice about that is that we can now study these tumors very carefully to see how they progress," says Dr. Sawyers.

"Based on what we find in these models, when we get a biopsy from a patient with prostate cancer, one day we will be able to diagnose it more exactly, make a prognosis and treat it. This is similar to the kind of diagnosis that can now be done with some breast cancers," says Dr. Waxman.

## Blood Test To Provide Earlier Info

Dr. Sawyers' team has also learned that some of the genes in question include proteins that are secreted into the blood, as PSA is. "We

may be able to develop blood tests to diagnose cancer earlier, and also to find out what gene is the cause of the cancer," he says.

At this point, in the second year of SWCRF funding, mice are being used to study the effect of the drugs currently used in humans. "As we look at how the levels of these genes change when drugs are used, hopefully we will have a tool we can use to track a patient -- to get an earlier hint that a drug is working in an individual. We hope to see a near-term change in a gene rather than waiting for six months for a tumor to develop. It's technically challenging, but down the road we see a blood test for that," says Dr. Sawyers.

Dr. Waxman says, "It's easier to see the exact process of progression in a mouse model. Then you can compare the animal models to the human tumors at a specific, given time. Hopefully this work will lead to earlier diagnosis, to a more specific diagnosis, and more understanding of the stage of the disease."

"One day this kind of research may develop therapies to correct prostate cancer before it becomes a threat. Prostate treatment will be more like a lumpectomy for breast cancer. Radical surgery won't be necessary, there will be help with gland preservation and some of the known side effects of a radical prostatectomy will be prevented," says Dr. Waxman.

## DIAGNOSIS: PROSTATE CANCER

**D**on Sands, a lawyer and real estate developer who lives in Seattle, did what is recommended for us all – he started having annual physicals when he was fifty. As part of that exam his doctor screened him for prostate cancer using a blood test and a physical exam.

"They tested my PSA levels several times, and my score was always very low, so alone it rang no bells with the doctor," Mr. Sands says. What did ring a bell last January, when Mr. Sands was fifty-five years old, was the standard Digital Rectal Exam. "The interesting thing was that from the previous year to then, my primary physician had found a difference in the way my prostate felt but my PSA level hadn't changed at all," he says. "She felt something she didn't like and sent me to a urologist. He poked, prodded, and did a biopsy."

A couple of weeks later, the diagnosis of prostate cancer came in. "The doctor said he was so sorry," Mr. Sands recalls. "I said, 'Why are you sorry? I'm the one with the cancer.' We laughed about it. It never occurred to me that it was a great big deal. My reaction was, okay, now what do we do about this?"

If you have prostate cancer, Seattle is "a pretty good place to be," according to Mr. Sands. He investigated various treatments – different surgeries and radiation techniques – and met with several different specialists. No one would tell him which technique

to choose, however, probably because most of the techniques have good outcomes.

Making a decision was difficult, but after gathering all the facts, "I figured, okay, I'm just going to bite the bullet and go for the robotic (minimally invasive) surgery (to remove the prostate)," says Mr. Sands. "That way, if they get it all, I'm done, even though there could be some side effects like incontinence or erectile dysfunction. With a radical prostatectomy, recovery is more of a hassle. With radiation, if you have a recurrence, they have great difficulty doing surgery later, and all the long-term effects of radiation aren't known, especially on someone my age."

Just half a day after the surgery, Mr. Sands stood and walked around his hospital room. Three days later, though he was a "little green," he went to a dinner party. And two weeks later he flew to the East coast to attend his daughter's college graduation.

Now, a year after the operation, Mr. Sands' information is in a national data base which puts his odds of a recurrence at 2-3% for the three years after surgery and 4-5% in the five years after surgery. That's a 95% to 97% cure rate. He feels fine.

"I don't worry," he says. "My doctors all agree that even if there is a recurrence, there are lots of new and much better treatments coming down the road."

# Junior Committee Works and Parties for a Great Cause

## *Committed 25-35 year old professionals have fun running stellar events*

*The idea is to “engage people in our age group. We want them to get involved, to donate, to come to our events and most importantly, to see the significance of charitable giving and understand why SWCRF should be their charity of choice. We are the generation of the future for the Foundation.”*

*– Joanna Steinberg, Chairman, Millennial Society*

### *Millennial Society Members*

Joanna Steinberg  
Bryan Rodman  
Logan Elsass  
Lindsay Kunion  
Thomas Carreras  
Kyle Widrick  
Rachel Katz  
Matthew Dunne  
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Jake Sokol  
Jacob Sussman  
Lara Tabatznik

Inspired and inspiring young professionals (25-35) can change the world! Last year, this group committed themselves to raising money for and awareness of SWCRF. Their Millennial Society debuted with a smashing *Cruise for a Cure* in June 2007, which attracted over 500 guests and featured dancing, a casino and, of course, gourmet delights. A *Fashionably Charitable* benefit to kick off New York's Fashion Week in February 2008 followed. Alexandra Richards (daughter of Rolling Stone Keith Richards) DJ'd, as guests partied and bid on such silent auction items as a Vera Wang dress, a D&G handbag and a Calvin Klein man's suit.

“We do everything – soup to nuts – and are the junior board of the SWCRF. This is unique in that many other Junior Boards for nonprofit organizations do not get their hands dirty and plan the ins and outs of their strategy and events” says Joanna Steinberg, Chairman of the Millennial Society. “We put together fundraising efforts, solicit donations and think creatively about how to raise awareness, exposure, and money for the cause. Everything the Foundation does on a larger scale, we do for our age group.”

“It's always great to be able to mingle with future leaders and raise money for a great cause, especially when you don't feel like you're at a charity event,” says Bryan Rodman, Vice-Chairman of the Millennial Society.

What's next? Right now Millennial Society members are brainstorming an event next Fall. Too cool for a cruise? Too early for a snowflake party? Watch the SWCRF website for the announcement of a great party, and news of the launch of the Millennial Society's own website.

**Know anyone who would be interested in joining exciting young professionals as they plan parties, raise money and spread awareness to support cutting edge cancer research? Contact [millennialsociety@waxmancancer.org](mailto:millennialsociety@waxmancancer.org).**

*(continued from back cover)*

Member Mary Yung Kantor, the collaborations that were still in their infancy were broadened and enriched. Research in China was funded, inpatient wards were remodeled and labs renovated with equipment not yet available in China.

Working together in a continuously expanding association, Dr. Waxman and Dr. Wang treated a group of Acute Promyelocytic Leukemia (APL) patients in Shanghai with a form of Vitamin A called all-trans retinoic acid (ATRA). Remarkably, almost all patients in the study entered remission, their cells regaining a normal appearance during the process of differentiation therapy. The results of this landmark clinical trial, demonstrating that differentiation therapy could fight cancer and confirming the high quality research being conducted in Shanghai, were published in the medical journal *Blood*.

Dr Wang's protégé, Dr. Zhu Chen and his wife Dr. Sai-Juan Chen became visiting scientists in Dr. Waxman's Mount Sinai lab. There, working with British scientist, Dr. Arthur Zelent, this world-class team scored another first. They cloned a gene critical to the process which prevents certain APL cells from responding to ATRA. Dr. Zhu Chen returned to China to head up the newly formed Shanghai Institute of Hematology, where Dr. Sai-Juan Chen is the current director.

Starting in the mid-90s, SWCRF collaborations investigated the use of Traditional Chinese Medicine, arsenic, as a treatment for APL. The most recent study, now being prepared for publication, showed a 98% five-year-survival rate in APL patients treated with a combination of ATRA, chemotherapy and arsenic, virtually curing this form of leukemia. These studies, conducted in Shanghai, raised the profile of arsenic as a promising anti-cancer treatment, resulting in a wave of additional investigations of arsenic's potential by researchers around the world.

A tribute to the power of collaboration, the SIH/SWCRF Center for Clinical Differentiation was established in Shanghai to house joint efforts. SWCRF has assisted in the development of SIH's outstanding molecular biology program. Another unique arrangement, the Co-PI Program, pairs a junior scientist from SIH with a senior researcher from the SWCRF's *Institute Without Walls* to encourage research continuation.

The collaboration has produced thirty-five scholarly articles, has helped train young researchers and has enriched East-West exchange. The significance of this partnership has been recognized many times. In 1997, Dr. Waxman received Shanghai's highest honor, the Magnolia Award. Dr. Zhu Chen, now Minister of Health of the People's Republic of China, has been elected to foreign membership in US, French, German, pan-European, Third World and global scientific academies.

# Groundbreaking Collaboration Raises Survival Rate To 98%

*25-year-old Chinese-American partnership provides first-ever demonstration of differentiation therapy and changes how APL is treated around the world*

**S**aving the lives of Acute Promyelocytic Leukemia (APL) patients, cloning genes, researching the clinical uses of arsenic trioxide traditionally used in Chinese medicine— these are just a few of the examples of a rich and productive collaboration that has been going on between SWCRF and Chinese scientists for the past quarter century. This outstanding teamwork will be officially recognized when Dr. Zhu Chen, China’s Minister of Health and longtime SWCRF friend and collaborator, receives an honorary doctorate from the Mount Sinai School of Medicine on May 7 and is celebrated at a luncheon on May 6.

Beginning in 1981, Dr. Sam Waxman mentored and worked with visiting Chinese scientists in his Mount Sinai laboratory. That collaborative research has shown remarkable results, curing patients thought to be terminally ill and proving the value of differentiation therapy –treating immature, malignant cells so that they resume their normal process of maturation and death, thus fighting cancer.

Three years after Dr. Waxman welcomed Chinese scientists into his lab, he visited Dr. Zhen-Yi Wang, a distinguished hematologist who was then President of the Shanghai Second Medical University (SSMU). With the help and guidance of SWCRF Board

*(continued on page 4)*

Help us keep costs down, please send your email address to: [swcrf@waxmancancer.org](mailto:swcrf@waxmancancer.org)

**Mark these exciting events on your calendar!**

**Golf Tournament & Dinner on the Beach**  
Monday, June 16, 10 AM-7 PM  
Steak & Lobster at Sunset  
The Creek Country Club

**Hamptons Happening**  
Saturday, July 19, 6-9 PM  
"Cooks and Croupiers – Treat your Tastebuds and Trust your Luck!"

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