



Focus on IBC

February 2009

IBC Research Foundation Newsletter

Indiana University
Breast Oncologist,

Dr. George Sledge,
Elected
ASCO
President



George W. Sledge Jr., M.D., a nationally

recognized pioneer in the development of novel therapies for breast cancer, has been elected to become president of the American Society of Clinical Oncology for a one-year term beginning in June 2010. He will take office as president-elect during ASCO's 45th Annual Meeting in Orlando in June.

Dr. Sledge is the Ballve-Lantero Professor of Oncology and professor of pathology and laboratory medicine at the Indiana University School of Medicine. He also co-directs the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer Research Laboratories at the Indiana University Simon Cancer Center.

"Being elected to serve as

Happy New Year

2008 Annual Letter

Each year we take the opportunity to review the Inflammatory Breast Cancer Research Foundation's activities for the year. [Click here](#) to read about the highlights of 2008 and hear about our hopes for 2009!

First International Inflammatory Breast Cancer Conference

By, Ginny Mason

Executive Director, ibcRF

December 5-7, 2008, 200+ researchers, physicians, patients, advocates, and others interested in inflammatory breast cancer gathered in Houston, TX for the First International Inflammatory Breast Cancer Conference. The conference, hosted by M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, was supported in part by GlaxoSmithKline, Pfizer, Eli Lilly and Company, The Houston Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Susan G. Komen Promise Grant KGO81287, and Cardinal Health.

The conference was designed to bring together a group of internationally recognized clinicians and scientists on the leading edge of discovery in inflammatory breast cancer. The latest epidemiological data, clinical diagnosis, imaging technologies, disease management and molecular investigation was presented. Breakout sessions were designed for research scientists, nurses, and patient advocates. Forty speakers were invited from France, Tunisia, Belgium, England, and Italy, as well as various cities in the United States.

Drs. Massimo Cristofanilli and Thomas Buchholz, Co-directors of the Morgan Welch Inflammatory Breast Cancer Clinic, co-chaired the planning committee for the conference and provided guidance and input throughout the weekend.

Dr. Sanford H. Barsky, The Donald A. Senhauser Endowed Chair of Pathology, Professor & Chair, The Ohio State



ASCO president is an honor and a privilege. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the board of directors to support all types of cancer research and address the challenges of the modern-day practice of oncology," said Dr. Sledge. "ASCO institutes real change by uniting all members of the oncology community with the common goal of improving cancer care and prevention and ensuring that all patients with cancer receive the highest quality care."

Dr. Sledge joined the Indiana University School of Medicine faculty in 1983, after completing his residency at St. Louis University and his fellowship at the University of Texas, San Antonio. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin and his medical degree from Tulane University. His research interests include molecular and tumor biology, growth factors, and anti-angiogenic therapy related to breast cancer.

"Every new member that is elected to ASCO's Board of Directors brings a unique perspective that will shape the society's future goals and practices," said Allen S. Lichter, M.D., chief executive officer of ASCO. "I am particularly looking forward to working with Dr. Sledge and watching how his 25 years as an ASCO member will define the legacy that he leaves on the society's efforts to improve cancer care."

Dr. Sledge has been recognized numerous times

University College of Medicine, was the keynote speaker opening the conference. While his talk, "The Tumor Embolus: Blastocyst Connection in IBC: Is it the Rainbow Connection?", was filled with challenging content; Dr. Barsky managed to hold the attention of the audience. Dr. Barsky gave an elegant review of his study of inflammatory breast cancer, including the development of MaryX his inflammatory breast cancer xenograft mouse. This presentation set the stage for the remainder of the conference.

Fifty poster presentations were included in the conference and covered the following topics: Clinical/Imaging; Epidemiology; Pre-clinical; and Translational abstracts. Posters provide an opportunity for conference attendees to connect personally with the researcher and ask questions about the research presented.

Saturday's agenda began with the Seattle television station (KOMO) segment on inflammatory breast cancer, "Silent Killer", presented by Michelle Esteban. The remainder of the day was devoted to presentations on epidemiology and basic research. Afternoon breakout sessions provided opportunities for researchers, nurses, and patient advocates to address their particular issues.

On Sunday, the focus shifted to treatment topics. A special thank-you to Dr. Sandra Swain for mentioning the support and work of the Inflammatory Breast Cancer Research Foundation in her presentation on combined modalities for therapy in the United States.

Throughout the conference select advocates were given the opportunity to briefly share about their unique journey. I used my segment to talk about the importance of research advocacy. The involvement of patients and patient advocates in the conference helped remind participants of the importance and urgency to improve diagnosis and treatment for this deadly disease.

It is hoped that this conference started important dialogue among international researchers and clinicians that will develop into concrete collaborations to move inflammatory breast cancer research forward. There are tentative plans for a second international conference in 2010 in France.

Update on National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC)

By, Kathleen Livingston

NBCC Board Member & ibcRF Volunteer

In the February 2008 [ibcRF Newsletter](#), I reported on my involvement as the ibcRF representative on the Board of Directors of the National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC.) I know many of you are familiar with NBCC, but others are not. I thought I would review NBCC's mission and how it supports ibcRF's mission. The goal of both groups is to eradicate breast cancer. This is a far reaching goal that requires a lot of effort from many stakeholders including ibcRF. Both

for his breast cancer research. In addition to being elected to the top position at ASCO, he recently received the Jill Rose Award - Breast Cancer Research Foundation (2007) and the 2006 Komen Foundation Brinker Award for Scientific Distinction. He is also listed in "America's Top Doctors" (2001-2007.)

The Inflammatory Breast Cancer Research Foundation is honored to have Dr. Sledge as a member of our Medical Advisory Board.

Upcoming Events

Feb. 20

Teleconference: Understanding Lymphedema; 12-1:30 pm EST

[Click here.](#)

Feb. 27 - March 1

9th Annual Conference for Young Women Affected by Breast Cancer, Dallas, TX

[Click here.](#)

Feb. 28 Amelia Project breast cancer research meeting, Indianapolis, IN

[Click here.](#)

Save The Date!

National Breast Cancer Coalition Fund
Annual Advocacy Training Conference

May 2 - 5, 2009
Omni Shoreham Hotel
Washington DC

The National Breast Cancer Coalition Fund (NBCCF) works to ensure that advocates have a voice everywhere breast cancer decisions are made. Join your voice to ours in the fight to end breast cancer!

www.stopbreastcancer.org

Register today!
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groups collaborate with the medical community to implement new models of research, increase access to high quality health care and breast cancer trials. I will outline some of NBCC activities over the last few months to help you understand how NBCC's work impacts breast cancer research.

In October 2008, the Lifetime Channel broadcast a movie called [Living Proof](#), which followed the introduction of the breast cancer drug Herceptin. NBCC played an important role in this drug development process. Fran Visco, President of NBCC, assisted the medical doctor (Dr. Dennis Slamon) by expediting patient accrual and arranging for compassionate use of the drug for those patients who did not qualify for the trial. This idea really spoke to me, as I am a Stage 4 patient; and sometimes I do not qualify for trials. In the general breast cancer population, 25% of patients are her-2 positive; but in the IBC population, nearly 40% of patients are Her-2 positive. Herceptin is an integral part of IBC treatment.

Every year in the spring, NBCC sponsors an Advocacy Training conference in Washington DC. The last day is spent lobbying on Capitol Hill. Advocates lobby for various legislative and public policy priorities; such as Quality Health Care for All, Department of Defense (DOD) breast cancer research funding, and the [Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act](#).

For eight years, NBCC lobbied Capitol Hill to pass the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act. In October, 2008, this legislation was signed into law. This sounds like a tremendous victory. However, NBCC was disappointed that it was not the version of the bill NBCC supported over the years. NBCC does not believe the manner in which it will be administered through the NIH and NCI will be as effective as the innovative method used with the DOD funded research projects.

The above NBCC legislative and public policy priorities support ibcRF's mission. We do not know what causes IBC nor do we know how to cure it. The initiative of the Environmental Act and the DOD research program could help us find the cause of IBC. Not everyone who is diagnosed with IBC has health care, and thus, the main NBCC initiative of Guaranteed Access to Quality Health Care for All is very important. If one does not have insurance, cancer treatment is almost impossible; as treatment is very expensive.

There are many activities happening at NBCC. This short article cannot review them all. I encourage you to look at the website www.stopbreastcancer.org and attend the Advocacy Conference in May, in Washington DC. It will help you become a more effective advocate and widen your understanding of breast cancer issues. We need to do that to eradicate breast cancer.

31st Annual San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium

*By, Ginny Mason, RN, BSN
Executive Director, ibcRF*

Once again thousands of people interested in breast cancer converged on San Antonio, TX for the largest breast cancer specific conference in the U.S. December 10-14, the Cancer Therapy & Research Center (CTRC at the University of Texas Health Sciences Center at San Antonio) and Baylor College of Medicine were joined by the American

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Association for Cancer Research (AACR) in presenting this conference.

This year's program included nine plenary speakers, including two new award lectures, mini-symposia on risk assessment, molecular profiling and imaging, over 900 posters, and nine poster discussion sessions. Dr. Larry Norton, from Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, was this year's recipient of the William S. McGuire Memorial Lectureship. Dr. Norton has devoted his research career to understanding the basic biology of cancer, the mathematics of tumor causation and growth, and development of better approaches for cancer management. He is perhaps best known for his "dose dense" or "sequential dose density" chemotherapy regimens, a mathematical model designed to maximize killing of cancer cells while minimizing toxicity. In his McGuire Lecture, Dr. Norton discussed "what we know" about breast cancer and how that view is changing as we study metastatic disease and the potential of "self-seeding."

Patricia Steeg, PhD, head of the Women's Cancers Section of the Laboratory of Molecular Pharmacology at the National Cancer Institute Center for Cancer Research, was this year's recipient of the Komen Brinker Award for Scientific Distinction in the area of basic science. Dr. Steeg's presentation focused on her work on molecular and translational aspects of tumor metastasis. She discovered the first metastasis suppressor gene, nm23, and brought this work to clinical trial. Currently she provides leadership to a Breast Cancer Center of Excellence studying metastasis to the brain.

While inflammatory breast cancer had a somewhat "low profile" at this year's symposium, there were a number of interesting posters on the subject by a variety of research groups. Those of us attending the conference, representing the Inflammatory Breast Cancer Research Foundation, made a point of visiting each of the posters and talking with the presenters. Hopefully some useful connections were made during those poster sessions.

A daily highlight, designed for advocate attendees, was the late afternoon mentor sessions. These sessions were provided by the Alamo Breast Cancer Foundation and featured prominent clinicians/researchers in the breast cancer community sharing their thoughts on the presentations of the day. This year the mentor sessions had to be moved to a much larger room, because they have become quite popular with more than just the advocate community. Inflammatory Breast Cancer Research Foundation volunteer and Board member Gayla Little, received a scholarship from the Alamo Breast Cancer Foundation to attend the conference and participated in special sessions designed for the scholarship participants. Others attending the conference were Gayla's husband (Michael), Bonnie Gray, and Ginny Mason.

For more information on the symposium and to view slides and posters visit: www.sabcs.org.