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For Immediate Release

Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy Anniversary Gala to Honor Dr. John Lahey with the first Edward Netter Award for Business

ACGT Gala Scheduled for April 19, 2017, and Also Features One of the First Patients Successfully Treated with Cancer Immunotherapy

STAMFORD, Conn., February 15, 2017 — **Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy (ACGT)**, the nation's only nonprofit dedicated exclusively to cell and gene therapies for cancer, is celebrating its anniversary with a Gala on **Wednesday, April 19, 2017**, at 6:30pm at The Harvard Club of New York City. **Dr. John Lahey**, president of Quinnipiac University, will be honored at the event with the first ever **Edward Netter Award for Business** for his contributions to ACGT and the community. Gala speakers also include: ACGT research fellow **Dr. Robert Vonderheide** of the University of Pennsylvania, who will speak on the exciting breakthroughs using immunotherapy for the treatment of solid cancers; and **Doug Olson**, one of the first three patients treated in the groundbreaking cancer immunotherapy CAR-T clinical trial developed by ACGT research fellow and Scientific Advisory Council member, Dr. Carl June. Tickets for the ACGT Gala are \$750 and are available at acgtfoundation.org/events/ or by emailing Barbara Gallagher, ACGT national director of philanthropy at bgallagher@acgtfoundation.org.

Barbara Netter of Greenwich, ACGT's honorary chairman of the Board and co-founder, will present the first-ever *Edward Netter Award for Business* to Dr. John Lahey, president of Quinnipiac University and an ACGT Board member since 2004. Dr. Lahey embodies the qualities prized by ACGT co-founder Edward Netter: intellect, creativity, tenacity, curiosity and compassion. He is the eighth President of Quinnipiac University, a private university located in Hamden, Connecticut. Upon his arrival at Quinnipiac in March of 1987, Dr. Lahey initiated a strategic planning process that has resulted in the growth of student enrollment from 2,000 to nearly 10,000 students. He also expanded Quinnipiac from a college to a university, which now offers more than 100 programs in its nine schools and colleges: Arts and Sciences, Business, Communications, Education, Engineering, Health Sciences, Law, Medicine and Nursing.

"I'm so thrilled to honor Dr. John Lahey," said Barbara Netter. "He has worked closely with Edward and me over the years to guide ACGT and to fund some of the most innovative and breakthrough cancer research in decades. I know Edward would be extremely proud to know what ACGT has been able to accomplish these years under the stewardship of John Lahey."

ACGT research fellow, Dr. Robert Vonderheide, will speak about his current work in immunotherapy and gene therapy that is targeting pancreatic cancer and other solid tumors at the Abramson Cancer Institute at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Vonderheide's translational work tests novel approaches such as vaccines, antibodies, and adoptive T cells for the treatment of patients with pancreatic cancer and other cancers. ACGT funded Dr. Vonderheide's early research work in immunotherapy.

Doug Olson of Tinicum Township, PA will share the details of his experience as “patient #2” in the first CAR T 19 immunotherapy trial in September 2010 at the University of Pennsylvania. The treatment for the trial was developed by ACGT research fellow, Dr. Carl June. Doug was diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) in July 1996 and has remained in remission since completing the trial.

“This Gala offers the opportunity to celebrate the successes of ACGT research fellows and honor those who make it all possible,” said John Walter, CEO and president of ACGT. “With our donors’ support, ACGT has been able to be a part of finding and funding some of the most exciting cancer treatment breakthroughs, several of which we anticipate coming to market this year.”

Founded in 2002 in Greenwich, Connecticut by residents Barbara and Edward (1933-2011) Netter, ACGT is headquartered in Stamford, Connecticut. As a national non-profit, ACGT has provided nearly \$27 million in funding for cancer cell, gene and immunotherapy research in North America. Since its inception, ACGT has funded the underlying science resulting in the formation of four companies who are in the final stages of bringing groundbreaking new treatments to patients: Novartis, Ziopharm, Juno Therapeutics, and Turnstone Biologics.

About Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy (ACGT)

Established in 2001, ACGT is the nation’s only non-profit dedicated exclusively to cell and gene therapy treatments for all types of cancer. One hundred percent of contributions go directly to research. ACGT has funded 52 grants in the U.S. and Canada since its founding in 2001 by Barbara Netter and her late husband Edward, to conduct and accelerate critically needed innovative research. Since its inception, ACGT has awarded 36 grants to Young Investigators and 16 grants to Clinical Investigators, totaling nearly \$27 million in funding. ACGT is located at 96 Cummings Point Road, Stamford, Connecticut 06902; 203-358-5055. To learn more, visit acgtfoundation.org or join the ACGT community on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#) at [@acgtfoundation](#).

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