

Prepared by: Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy (ACGT)
acgtfoundation.org

Contact: Jenifer Howard | JHPR
jhoward@jhowardpr.com
203-273-4246

Draft for Review

Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy Celebrates Breakthroughs in Cancer Research at Anniversary Gala

Dr. John Lahey, President of Quinnipiac University, Honored with First-Ever ACGT Edward Netter Award for Business and Industry; Gala Also Featured Cancer Scientist Dr. Robert Vonderheide and “Patient #2” Doug Olson Who Was Successfully Treated With Cancer Immunotherapy

STAMFORD, Conn., April 21, 2017 — Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy (ACGT), the nation’s only nonprofit dedicated exclusively to cell and gene therapies for cancer, recently celebrated its 16th anniversary with a Gala at The Harvard Club of New York City. The event gathered more than 250 attendees that included many noted scientists working in the field of cell and gene therapy, along with supporters of ACGT. The event raised more than \$500,000 that will go directly into funding additional cancer gene and cell therapy-based research grants supported by ACGT. Featured speakers at the event included Dr. John Lahey, president of Quinnipiac University, Dr. Robert Vonderheide of the University of Pennsylvania, and Doug Olson, “Patient #2” in one of the first successful and groundbreaking cancer immunotherapy CAR-T clinical trials.

Dr. John Lahey, president of Quinnipiac University, was honored by Barbara Netter, co-founder of ACGT and honorary chairman of the Board with the first ever *Edward Netter Award for Business and Industry* for his contributions to ACGT and the community. Dr. Lahey has been a long-time ACGT Board member and supporter.

Keynote speakers included ACGT research fellow Dr. Robert Vonderheide of the University of Pennsylvania, who spoke on the exciting breakthroughs using immunotherapy for the treatment of pancreatic and solid cancer tumors. He also used the ACGT Gala as an opportunity to announce exciting new research he and his team are currently developing that he hopes will become a preventative cancer vaccine. ACGT funded Dr. Vonderheide’s early research work in immunotherapy.

Doug Olson, one of the first three chronic symphonic leukemia (CLL) patients in the nation treated in the groundbreaking cancer immunotherapy CAR-T 19 clinical trial developed by ACGT research fellow and Scientific Advisory Council member, Dr. Carl June at the University of Pennsylvania, also told his compelling and moving story of being successfully treated with cancer immunotherapy treatment and how he owed his life to ACGT for funding the study. Doug was diagnosed with CLL in July 1996 and has remained in remission since completing the trial in 2010. ACGT was one of the initial funders of the study and supported this type of work long before other organizations, the government or pharmaceutical companies joined in.

“The ACGT Gala was such a great opportunity to celebrate the recent successes we have seen in

treating cancer with cell, gene and immunotherapy,” noted Barbara Netter. “All of us at ACGT are incredibly proud to have played a part in funding some of the nation’s most talented scientists and helping bring these treatments to the forefront of medicine today. Honoring Dr. John Lahey with the first-ever *Edward Netter Award for Business and Industry* was also a shining moment in ACGT’s 16 year history. I just wish my husband and ACGT co-founder Edward Netter was still here to witness how far we’ve come in the last several years.” Netter noted that Edward passed away in 2011, right before the success of the CAR-T 19 clinical trial for leukemia was announced.

“The Gala offered 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 by Greenwich, Connecticut, 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 some of the underlying science that has resulted in the formation of either licensing agreements or biotech companies including Novartis, Ziopharm, Juno, Turnstone Biologics, all of which are in various stages of bringing new treatments to patients.

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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