



LA JOLLA (FEB. 20, 2014) – In honor of the late Duane Roth, San Diego's life science and technology leader who excelled at uniting entrepreneurs, scientists, clinicians, investors and others to advance innovation, Moores Cancer Center's Office of Industry Relations has created an award to honor champions of translational oncology.

Internationally renowned surgeon and breast cancer oncology specialist, Laura Esserman, M.D., Ph.D., has been selected as the first recipient of the Duane Roth Award. Dr. Esserman is Director of the Carol Franc Buck Breast Care Center at the University of California, San Francisco and a member of a taskforce for President Obama's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology Working Group on Advancing Innovation in Drug Development and Evaluation.

In the field of breast cancer oncology, Dr. Esserman has pioneered the integration of clinical care and research, automating tools for the capture of patient and clinical data and developing system to tailor care to a patient's biology, preference and a therapy's performance.

As the recipient of the Duane Roth Award, Dr. Esserman will be the keynote speaker at the UCSD Moores Cancer Center Office of Industry Relation's 10th Annual Industry/Academy Translational Oncology Symposium on Feb. 20. Also present will be a 31-year-old San Diego woman who was diagnosed with late-stage breast cancer two years ago, and has benefited from personalized breast cancer treatment made available through one of Esserman's clinical studies.

The Duane Roth Award will also make a world-renowned researcher available for meetings and presentations with leaders of Southern California's life science industry, helping to expand the region's global network.

The Duane Roth Award was created to honor innovators who, like Roth, possess a passion to improve health care and the ability to surmount institutional, political and competitive boundaries to help shepherd life-saving therapies, tools and diagnostics to market.

Roth, who was CEO of Connect, an organization supporting innovation and entrepreneurship, was a former biotech executive, a philanthropist and served on numerous boards throughout the state including the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, of which he was a vice-chairman, the Sanford Burnham Medical Research Institute, and Biocom. At the time of his death on Aug. 3, 2013, Roth served on 17 different community, business and educational advisory committees.

Numerous biotechnology executives, researchers and community members supported the creation of the award.

"Duane understood the importance of connecting scientists, business people and finance folks, helping to make us one big happy family in San Diego," said Alan Lewis, CEO of Medistem. "Duane also understood the importance of helping the scientist entrepreneur get the resources they need, which is what he was able to do so well at Connect," Lewis said.

Background: Moores Cancer Center's Office of Industry Relations serves as a conduit between the life sciences industry, clinicians and academia, helping to transform innovative research and discoveries into life-saving products. Its annual industry/academia symposium, this year celebrating a decade of success, has provided the perfect setting for introductions to be made, collaborations to be bolstered and for getting products off the shelf and back on the path to commercialization.

The UCSD Moores Cancer Center 10th Annual Industry/Academia Translational Oncology Symposium is scheduled for Feb. 20, 2014, at the Cancer Center's Goldberg Auditorium, from 8am to 6pm.

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