



Heroes OF CANCER

Celebrating individuals, corporations and organizations that have inspired others in the fight against cancer.



VIRTUAL EVENT
*From the Comfort of
Your Couch*

**WEDNESDAY,
APRIL 21, 2021
7 – 8 P.M.**

Heroes OF CANCER

2021 Heroes Award Winners

The Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute is honored to present its 2021 Heroes of Cancer Awards celebration. This year's event continues Karmanos Cancer Institute's rich history of recognizing individuals, corporations and organizations that have distinguished themselves and inspired others in the fight against cancer. This year's honorees represent a wide-range of community advocates who champion for cancer prevention, awareness, early detection, quality survivorship and research advancements so that more people can survive this disease and live a full life. Congratulations to all of tonight's honorees and all those who support them.

Ann Delisi has been a multimedia presence in Detroit for more than 30 years. Admired for her professionalism and integrity, Ann's knowledge of music is incomparable. She is the host of 101.9 FM WDET's "Ann Delisi's Essential Music," heard Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m.

Thank you to Ann Delisi; Mo Meldrum; our generous print materials donor, Grigg Graphic Services; AVL Inc., and our dedicated volunteers and staff.

ABOUT THE BARBARA ANN KARMANOS CANCER INSTITUTE

Karmanos Cancer Institute is a leader in transformative cancer care, research and education through courage, commitment and compassion. Our vision is a world free of cancer. As part of McLaren Health Care, Karmanos is the largest provider of cancer care and research in the state of Michigan. For more than 75 years, our administrative and research headquarters, along with our premier specialty cancer hospital, have been located in downtown Detroit. Our 15 network sites throughout the state deliver market-leading cancer care and clinical trials conveniently to the communities where many of our patients live. Karmanos is recognized by the National Cancer Institute as one of the best cancer centers in the nation. Our academic partnership with the Wayne State University School of Medicine provides the framework for cancer research and education – defining new standards of care and improving survivorship. For more information, call 1-800-KARMANOS (800-527-6266) or visit www.karmanos.org. Follow Karmanos on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).





COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Honoring an individual or organization for assisting in efforts to reach the community with the important message of cancer early detection, cancer care and/or survivorship, in a volunteer capacity.

The Dynami Foundation, Founder: Flora Migyanka

Plymouth, MI

Flora Migyanka is a daughter, sister, wife and mom. She is also a breast cancer survivor. After she went for her first mammogram screening at age 40, Flora was diagnosed and treated for stage one Invasive Lobular Carcinoma. After a long road, which involved a bilateral mastectomy, reconstruction and ongoing tamoxifen therapy, she came out on the other side healthy and cancer-free. In 2016, her experience led her to found The Dynami Foundation, a nonprofit with a mission to further the research, treatment and prevention of breast cancer while strengthening and supporting patients as they navigate the complexities of their breast cancer journey. The Foundation also hosts its annual Uncork for a Cure event. Since its inception, the annual event has grown tenfold, incorporating the city's award-winning chefs, sommeliers and artists all uniting for one cause: breast cancer research and awareness. To date, the event has raised \$1 million. Flora also volunteers her time teaching yoga to cancer survivors for the Cancer Support Community. She is on the Breast Cancer Patient Advisory Board at the University of Michigan and the National Steering Committee for the Lobular Breast Cancer Alliance.

"As a breast cancer survivor and founder of Dynami Foundation, I am deeply honored and humbled to be recognized as a Hero of Cancer. It is our mission at Dynami to help further the research and awareness for Lobular Breast Cancer, a common yet understudied and underfunded subtype of breast cancer. Our inaugural patient event and symposium brought together breast cancer clinicians and researchers from Karmanos, University of Michigan and Ascension Health. My hope is to create a consortium, with Dynami funding innovative research for Lobular Breast Cancer. Giving back on a local level is the most impactful way to strengthen our communities. By collaborating with physicians and researchers here in Michigan, continued patient advocacy and outreach, we will further foster our direct impact on research and patient care."

COMPASSIONATE CAREGIVER AWARD


Honoring health care professionals whose treatment of cancer patients has been marked by exceptional technical skill, combined with sensitivity and compassion.

Michael Cher, M.D.

Huntington Woods, MI

Michael Cher, M.D., professor and chair of Urology at the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute and Wayne State University School of Medicine, is a highly-skilled surgeon and physician in all aspects of genitourinary oncology. He is compassionate, caring and always takes time with his patients and their family members to answer questions and address concerns. Not only does Dr. Cher take a vested interest in his patients, but he is also a meticulous surgeon. He follows his patients' survivorship and keeps a continuous database of outcomes over time regarding the quality of life to improve care. He enrolls patients in clinical trials on a frequent basis and is one of the pioneers in the Michigan Urological Surgical Improvement Collaborative, which has set statewide standards of care.

"It's really nice to receive this recognition from my peers. We try hard to care for the whole patient, not just the cancer. It's certainly a whole team approach where our nurses, clinic staff, physicians assistant and urology residents all contribute to the well-being of our patients."



MAUREEN KEENAN MELDRUM HOPE AWARD

Honoring an individual for unprecedented commitment, compassion and demonstrated leadership that engages, supports and inspires others in the fight to end breast cancer.

Andrea Cherry

Petoskey, MI

Andrea Cherry, LMSW, OSW-C, continually goes above and beyond to be present for patients, their families and fellow staff members. She is always willing to assist patients and families in any way she can. Her focus is to make it easier for patients to get through treatments, so they never become frustrated with obstacles and give up. Andrea is a rock for Karmanos patients and staff. She provides emotional support and also assists with finding financial support. If a patient has an obstacle preventing them from starting or continuing treatment such as work, family or transportation, she will always work to find a solution.

"I am proud to be part of the community of heroes at Karmanos Cancer Institute, and it is truly an honor to serve those living with cancer. I feel very blessed to love what I do and to work with such a caring, dedicated team at Karmanos Cancer Institute at McLaren Northern Michigan."

THE GERI LESTER COURAGE AWARDS

Honoring an individual whose battle with cancer has been an inspiration to family, friends and community.

In Memory

Jeffrey Forman, M.D., FACR

Bloomfield Hills, MI

Jeffrey Forman, M.D., FACR, spent his life and career helping people with cancer. He worked for 35 years as a radiation oncologist and held multiple professional appointments during his 14-year career at Karmanos – including serving as medical director of affiliate programs and satellites, medical director of philanthropy, chief and chair of the Multidisciplinary Urology Oncology Program, director of the Neutron Therapy Program, and associate director of Clinical Care. He loved his role as a physician and treated every patient with kindness, respect, understanding and humor. After becoming a cancer patient himself and undergoing a bone marrow transplant, he had a whole new outlook on cancer. He became a part of the Karmanos Cancer Institute's fundraising team to help inform community members about the important lifesaving work being done at Karmanos. His passion for helping patients, informing the community and raising funds to further cancer research was inspiring.

"Our family misses Jeffrey constantly, but we take comfort in the fact that he helped so many people get through their own difficult journeys with cancer." - Miriam Forman, wife of Dr. Jeffrey Forman

In Memory

Laurel Beth Stroempl

Toledo, OH

Laurel Beth Stroempl, PAC, started her career as a physician assistant in the bone marrow transplant unit at Harper University Hospital. She later transferred to work with Anthony Shields, M.D., Ph.D., medical oncologist, at Karmanos Cancer Institute. Altogether, she spent 24 years helping patients. She was a dedicated health care provider, often staying so late that instead of driving home, she would camp out on the floor of her office. She worked tirelessly throughout her career and tried valiantly to continue through her own cancer diagnosis and treatment. Even on the worst of days, she never complained.

"My sister, Laurel Stroempl, had more strength, more courage and a more giving nature than anyone I have ever known. I am thrilled that she is being honored for the qualities that made her my personal hero." - Marilee Lucus, sister of Laurel Beth Stroempl



LEADERSHIP AWARD

Honoring an organization or individual who has helped to bring about a society that encourages people to speak out about their illness, educate others about cancer and increase funding for cancer research.

Organization

David Cook, M.D.

Essexville, MI

David Cook, M.D., who retired earlier this year, was the founding physician for cancer care in the Tri-City area and around Bay City, Michigan. He started in an outpatient department within the hospital formally known as General Hospital and continued his lifelong commitment to oncology and hematology patients for more than 40 years. Dr. Cook established the Tumor Registry and formal Tumor Boards as well as clinical trial participation in his community. He actively participated in the education of future doctors within the graduate medical education program and served as a continual ambassador for the importance of further oncology education within the community. Dr. Cook was a kind, conscientious and compassionate doctor who spent much time with patients as needed regardless of his daily schedule.

"I feel extremely honored to be given the Heroes of Cancer Award. I wish to thank the entire medical team at Karmanos Bay Region and especially Mary Covieo and Nancy King for their aid and support."

MEDIA AWARD

Recognizing outstanding media work that communicates important messages about cancer awareness.

Kimberly Gill and Meaghan St. Pierre from WDIV Local 4

Detroit, MI

Kimberly Gill and Meaghan St. Pierre worked hard to produce two fantastic stories about Isaac Powell, M.D., member of the Genitourinary Oncology Multidisciplinary Team. These stories highlighted Dr. Powell's research on prostate cancer in African American men as well as his personal experiences in medicine. The features created an opportunity for Dr. Powell to speak with Al Roker on NBC's TODAY show, giving Karmanos and Dr. Powell a national spotlight. Thanks to Kimberly and Meaghan, racial disparities in cancer care have been brought to the forefront, and the public can broadly recognize Dr. Powell's incredible work.

"It was an honor to be trusted to share with both a local and national audience the important work Dr. Ike Powell is doing in prostate cancer research regarding African American men. Receiving the Heroes of Cancer Award is the icing on the cake! I am indeed humbled and pray that the exposure will help raise money for this underfunded population and ultimately save lives." - Kimberly Gill

"One of the true joys of my job is to be able to shine a light on people in our community making a significant impact in the lives of others. Dr. Isaac Powell's lifetime dedication to treating patients with prostate cancer and his research into how this disease affects African American men differently is crucial work that is saving lives. I am grateful to have assisted Kimberly Gill with this project and hope the stories will increase awareness for this important cause in the prostate cancer fight. Thank you for this honor." - Meaghan St. Pierre





PHILANTHROPY AWARDS

Honoring those who have dedicated their resources and talent to benefit the cause of cancer.

The Wentworth Family

Bloomfield Township, MI

Before her passing in March 2013 from ovarian cancer, Micheline Wentworth established a research fund, directed by Robert Morris, M.D., leader of the Gynecologic Oncology Multidisciplinary Team at Karmanos, to assist scientists in developing a more effective way to detect and treat the disease. Her husband and daughters picked up the mantle by growing this fund, now known as the Micheline Wentworth Fund for Ovarian Cancer Research. Their loyal friends and family have consistently demonstrated their love of Micheline and the Wentworth Family by supporting this endeavor with their annual gifts to the fund. The family matches all donations made through their fundraiser and has personally contributed sizeable gifts to the fund. Collectively, more than \$310,000 has been donated to the Micheline Wentworth Fund for Ovarian Cancer Research. In addition to the amazing job they do to honor their wife and mother and to support the work of Dr. Morris and his team at the Karmanos Cancer Institute, they are also some of the nicest, kindest people you will ever meet.

"We, in every action to support this research, are inspired by the hope that this will spare families in the future a similar loss. Our mother taught us that you, as an individual, have the power to make change."

- Chantal Wentworth-Mullin, daughter of Micheline and Bill Wentworth

DR. MICHAEL J. BRENNAN SCIENTIFIC DISTINCTION AWARD


Honoring an individual for their demonstrated leadership in basic or clinical cancer research.

Nerissa Viola, Ph.D.

Canton, MI

Nerissa Viola, Ph.D., is the co-leader of the Molecular Imaging Program and an associate professor in the Department of Oncology at Karmanos Cancer Institute and Wayne State University School of Medicine. Her research focuses on the development of novel, quantitative imaging agents to interrogate tumor biology. Her important work has and continues to lead toward the development of PET radiotracers specific for oncogenic biomarkers and immune signatures. In 2019, Dr. Viola received the well-earned Junior Faculty Award from the Wayne State University Academy of Scholars, solidifying her as an exceptional young faculty and demonstrating the importance of her work.

"I am deeply honored and humbled for having been selected a recipient of the Dr. Michael J. Brennan Scientific Distinction Award. This award would not be possible without the perseverance and hard work of the members of my team. I would like to express my appreciation to the Karmanos Cancer Institute for recognizing my scientific and leadership merits. I can only hope to follow in Dr. Brennan's footsteps to lead and inspire more researchers to strive to cure cancer."





DR. GLORIA HEPPNER INNOVATIVE SCIENCE AWARD

Honoring an individual who has proven success with innovative initiatives that help advance cancer research.

Hayley Thompson, Ph.D.

Huntington Woods, MI

Hayley Thompson, Ph.D., associate center director, Community Outreach and Engagement, Karmanos Cancer Institute, tackles racial disparities through novel approaches to engage communities in research. Her research seeks to understand and eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in cancer prevention and control, specifically screening and survivorship. Her research has focused on the assessment of sociocultural factors that influence cancer screening and she is the creator of the Group-Based Medical Mistrust Scale. Dr. Thompson's research experience further extends to the development of culturally targeted interventions to enhance cancer care in our community.

"I am so honored to receive this award. It is especially meaningful because my main goal has always been to develop and apply new approaches to old problems, namely, longstanding barriers to equity in cancer care and outcomes. However, none of this work could have moved forward without the input and support of my team members in Karmanos' Office of Cancer Health Equity and Community Engagement and colleagues in the Population Studies and Disparities Research Program. I'm fortunate to work with smart, compassionate people who share similar goals, and that makes all the difference. This work has also depended on the involvement of many patients and community members who are committed to this work and generously give their time to these efforts."

RIBBON CHAMPION AWARDS

Honoring an individual or group who demonstrates an unwavering commitment to improve education, screening and treatment of a certain type of cancer to encourage prevention while increasing survivorship and advocating to advance cancer research.

April Brown

Clinton Township, MI

April Brown is the director of Concierge Services at Karmanos Cancer Center in Detroit. In her role, she oversees the Oncology Patient Navigation Program, which is dedicated to breaking down barriers to cancer patients' care. Her group goes above-and-beyond to help patients obtain the care they need to have their best chance at beating cancer. April founded this program at Karmanos three years ago and has since helped countless patients. Most recently, April has been tasked to organize and accelerate a cancer screening program at Karmanos. Though Karmanos previously offered cancer screenings, April thought it was important to expand the offerings since many people do not get regular cancer screenings. Early detection and treatment are critical to improving the outcomes of cancer patients. The need for screening is especially acute for populations in lower-income neighborhoods that typically have limited access to primary care. Everything April Brown does is for the betterment of the cancer patient. By cultivating a team of dedicated, caring individuals, she has touched the lives of thousands of cancer patients – in large ways and small. She continues to identify and pursue every opportunity to help those fighting cancer make their journey a little bit easier. For that, she will always be a Hero of Cancer.

"I am deeply humbled to be the recipient of the Karmanos Cancer Institute's Heroes of Cancer Ribbon Champion Award. I am honored to accept this award on behalf of my entire team who have always supported me and shared in my belief that our patients are the true heroes."





BARBARA ANN



CANCER INSTITUTE

Wayne State University

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