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Janet Rowley to receive AACR award for lifetime achievement in cancer research

April 14, 2010

Janet Rowley, the Blum-Riese Distinguished Service Professor in Medicine, Molecular Genetics and Cell Biology, and Human Genetics, will receive the seventh annual American Association for Cancer Research [Award for Lifetime Achievement in Cancer Research](#). It will be presented Sunday, April 18 at the AACR 101st annual meeting in Washington, D.C.

Rowley is widely regarded as one of the founders and a major champion of modern cancer cytogenetics, which helped open the field of molecular oncology. Her identification of recurring chromosome translocations in hematological malignancies was a landmark discovery that revolutionized the scientific view of the importance of recurring chromosome abnormalities in cancer cells.

“Dr. Rowley has made exceptional contributions to cancer science and medicine,” said Margaret Foti, chief executive officer of the AACR. “Not only has her work had a positive impact on progress in basic science and the growing knowledge of cancer genetics, but it has also been important in the treatment of patients. There are many people alive today because of Dr. Rowley’s work.”

The AACR lifetime achievement award was established in 2004 to honor an individual who has made significant, fundamental contributions to cancer research, either through a single scientific discovery or a body of work. These contributions, whether in research, leadership or mentorship, must have a lasting impact on the cancer field and must demonstrate a lifetime commitment to progress against cancer.

In 1972, Rowley discovered the first two recurring chromosome translocations, one of which resulted in the Philadelphia chromosome seen in chronic myelogenous leukemia, which contributed to the development of STI-571 (Gleevec or Imatinib). She subsequently discovered six other translocations and/or chromosomal inversions. Among her numerous scientific contributions, Rowley was the first to map the location of the myeloid-lymphoid leukemia gene.

Internationally renowned for her work in the discovery of molecular genetic alterations found in human malignancies, Rowley has studied chromosome abnormalities in leukemia and lymphoma to provide critical scientific insights that have led to cures for previously untreatable cancers. Her discoveries have resulted in more accurate diagnostic techniques and the development of effective treatment protocols targeted to particular patient subgroups.

Rowley earned bachelor’s degrees in philosophy (1944) and science (1946) and a doctorate in medicine (1948) from the University of Chicago. She completed a medical internship at the U.S. Public Health Service Marine Hospital in Chicago in 1951.

A faculty member at the University of Chicago since 1962, Rowley’s laboratory continues to explore new areas of research, including the pattern of gene and microRNA expression in normal hematopoietic cells and acute myelogenous leukemia cells with recurring translocations.

Among her numerous honors, Rowley was awarded the [2009 Presidential Medal of Freedom](#), the 1998 Albert Lasker Clinical Research Award, the 1998 National Medal of Science, the 1989 Charles S. Mott Prize from General Motors Cancer Research Foundation, and the AACR’s G.H.A. Clowes Memorial Award in 1989 and the Dorothy P. Landon-AACR Prize for Translational Cancer Research in 2005.

She is a member of numerous honorary societies including the National Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Medicine, the American Philosophical Society and the American



Janet Rowley, the Blum-Riese Distinguished Service Professor in Medicine, Molecular Genetics and Cell Biology, and Human Genetics

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Academy of Arts and Sciences. Rowley holds honorary doctorate degrees from 11 institutions. She was a member of the AACR's nominating committee and has served on the editorial board of *Cancer Research*. She is currently a member of the AACR.

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