

Article Impact of DGMRF’s Additional Support— Dana Farber Summer Booklet (June) 2020

By Colleen Sullivan

de Gunzburg Myeloma Research Foundation gift fuels again and further drug discovery for multiple myeloma

The de Gunzburg Myeloma Research Foundation (“DGMRF”) reaffirmed its commitment to the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (Harvard) with an additional \$150,000 gift (subsequent to its earlier gift of \$1 million) to support multiple myeloma research under the direction of Dr. Constantine Mitsiades, MD, PhD and Dr. Paul Richardson, MD, clinical program director and director of clinical research within the Jerome Lipper Multiple Myeloma Center.

Baron Vivien de Gunzburg founded DGMRF in 2012 to support early stage fundamental research into multiple myeloma, with an emphasis on the development of novel therapeutics and recruitment of early career scientists and physicians. A multiple myeloma patient himself, Mr. de Gunzburg was referred to Dr. Richardson and Dana-Farber in 2003 during his initial diagnosis and treatment. Dr Richardson has been following him for the last 17 years in coordination with his other care giver in France Professeur Jean-Paul Fermand from Hospital Saint-Louis in Paris.

“I founded DGMRF to show my gratitude to Dr. Richardson who saved my life, but also out of a desire to help patients like me who also may have gone through the long path of this rare disease with many relapses and hard therapies of all kinds. There is hope. And with the best myeloma team in the world, we will give patients a chance to live better and longer,” said Baron de Gunzburg.

Article Impact of DGMRF's Additional Support— Dana Farber Summer Booklet (June) 2020

By Colleen Sullivan

Myeloma is a hitherto incurable hematologic malignancy i.e. the last totally incurable form of cancer (however early it is diagnosed). Indeed, however lethal other cancers can be, if diagnosed early enough and treated with the best care, patients do have a chance of survival and total remission

“By continuing to support Dr. Richardson on the clinical side and Dr. Mitsiades on the fundamental research side, we have reaffirmed our loyalty, commitment and most importantly our strong confidence in the utmost experienced, skilled and creative specialists in the world. Their dedication workwise, technically and humanely is second to none. This is the remarkable group that will find a cure to multiple myeloma!”

Paul and Constantine, in partnership with their colleagues and as a team, have indeed been the largest contributors of therapies developed in myeloma to date, with greater than 20 of the 26 FDA approvals over the last 17 years, including more than 10 novel drugs in the field. Moreover, they operate within a truly world-class and top tier dedicated cancer research institution, Dana-Farber, which in itself has contributed to 36 new therapies in cancer overall.

“I had no choice and wanted to fight myeloma. And together with amazing friends and family who cared about this much overlooked, intellectually challenging and undefeated disease, while foreseeing its increasing prevalence, we supported Drs. Richardson and Mitsiades, leveraging the bench to bedside approach for faster and more effective translation into clinical success. The exchange between clinical and

Article Impact of DGMRF's Additional Support— Dana Farber Summer Booklet (June) 2020

By Colleen Sullivan

fundamental research with the most advanced practitioners on each side is the only way to help research move quicker than the disease” says de Gunzburg.

“Myeloma research is the battle between David and Goliath. And because real breakthrough always take perseverance and time, even in this very difficult current economic environment, we will not stop financing but rather are increasing our pledge. Findings have been exponential over the last 15 years. But we are currently at an inflexion point. Now is the moment to show uncompromising commitment.”

Finding a cure to myeloma will also be the key to many other treatments for numerous other forms of cancer and other diseases. For example, there are several aspects of immune therapy (as a key part of current myeloma research) that could help other diseases including viral infections where the therapeutic uses of natural killer cells can have immediate applications including against coronavirus.

“The multiplier effect of supporting this academic team’s research now creates the transformative ability to break myeloma, make a real change and impact to medicine broadly and overcome the last frontier between ethics, art and science.” adds Vivien.

Previous support from DGMRF has fueled novel combination therapies which have been implemented in clinical trials and approvals including one of the best therapies in the market currently. Thanks to this incredibly meaningful new gift, Drs. Richardson and Mitsiades can expand their efforts into personalized treatments that aim to overcome drug resistance and target immune strategies, which are especially critical in preventing

Article Impact of DGMRF’s Additional Support— Dana Farber Summer Booklet (June) 2020

By Colleen Sullivan

relapse and find new approaches to overcome this orphan disease, which has afflicted human kind since at least 5000 BC.

“We are so grateful for Vivien and his Foundation’s continued and solid partnership, which is deeply personal and highly engaged with a bond of true friendship,” said Dr. Richardson, who also serves as the R.J. Corman Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. “This funding allows us to accelerate individualized treatments and expand our research significantly, which in turn will provide critical support in bringing renewed hope and a potential cure to our patients worldwide.”