

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

By Colleen Sullivan

de Gunzburg Myeloma Research Foundation’s additional gift fuels greater drug discovery for multiple myeloma

Building on its previous gift of \$1 million, the de Gunzburg Myeloma Research Foundation (DGMRF) strengthened its commitment to early stage fundamental research for multiple myeloma with an additional \$150,000. This will support Paul Richardson, MD and Constantine Mitsiades, MD, PhD, further develop novel therapeutics and enhance the recruitment of early career scientists and physicians.

Baron Vivien de Gunzburg founded DGMRF in 2012 to find a cure to myeloma, the second most common hematologic malignancy. Myeloma remains an ancient and incurable form of blood cancer, despite important advances over the last 20 years.

“I wanted to fight myeloma and sought to help patients like me who may also navigate the long and challenging path of this rare cancer. There is hope,” said de Gunzburg, a myeloma survivor himself for 17 years.

“Together with amazing friends and family who care about this overlooked and intellectually challenging disease—while foreseeing its increasing prevalence—we are helping research move quicker than myeloma itself.”

De Gunzburg continued, “DGMRF reaffirms its steadfast confidence in the utmost experienced, skilled and creative specialists in the world. Their dedication is second to none. This is the remarkable complementary team that will find a cure to myeloma!”

Richardson and Mitsiades, in close partnership with their colleagues and team members at the Jerome Lipper Multiple Myeloma Center, and with vital support from DGMRF, are among the largest contributors of myeloma therapies developed to date, which has seen more than 20 of the 26 FDA approvals over the last 17 years, including 11 new drugs. Moreover, Dana-Farber as a world-class and dedicated cancer research institution, has contributed to numerous other new therapies for many types of cancer beyond multiple myeloma.

“Myeloma is the battle between David and Goliath. Real breakthroughs take perseverance. Findings have been exponential. But we are now at an inflexion point. Even in this difficult environment, we further commit to the transformative ability of breaking myeloma and impact medicine broadly,” adds de Gunzburg.

Answers to myeloma will be key to many treatments for other cancers and diseases. For example, myeloma-based research involving certain immune cells known as natural killer cells show promise for treatments across cancers and viral infections, as well as other strategies.

“We are so grateful for Vivien and his foundation’s continued partnership, which is highly engaged and deeply personal with a bond of true friendship,” said Richardson. “This funding allows us to expand our research significantly and accelerate individualized treatment, advance novel therapeutics and improve care for patients worldwide.”