



### ACCRF at the SPORE Meetings – July 16-18, 2006

Each summer the National Cancer Institute (NCI) convenes the annual meeting of the Specialized Programs of Research Excellence (SPORE). The SPOREs are multi-year research grants to major academic institutions that emphasize translational research – research that focuses on speeding therapies from the bench (basic science) to the bedside (the clinic).

ACCRF Trustees Marnie and Jeff Kaufman attended the recent SPORE meetings in Baltimore as Patient Advocates. Patient Advocates provide SPORE researchers with advice on structuring patient-friendly research projects, remind the researchers of the importance of rapid therapeutic advances, and put a human face to the diseases studied. Four survivors were among the Patient Advocates representing the four SPORES focusing on Head & Neck cancers; interestingly, two (including Marnie) were ACC survivors. Marnie and Jeff attended the various scientific meetings and met directly with the Directors of the Head & Neck SPORES to discuss the focus of their research.

Alongside the annual meeting, ACCRF held a scientific meeting to strategize on the foundation's prospective research projects. In attendance were Dr. David Sidransky (Johns Hopkins), Dr. Norman Sharpless (UNC) and Dr. Robert Haddad (Dana-Farber) from ACCRF's Scientific Advisory Board as well as Dr. Adel El-Naggar (MD Anderson), Dr. Christopher Moskaluk (UVA) and Dr. Henry Frierson (UVA).

The group discussed at length the genomics project that will seek to identify mutations involved in the onset and development of ACC. By identifying targets for therapy, the genomics project may narrow down the best candidate drugs to treat ACC patients. ACCRF hopes to disseminate quickly all the results of the genomics project to interested researchers, so they may proceed with their own follow-on studies.

In addition, the group discussed the development of animal models and cell lines of ACC. It is a key goal of ACCRF to make these crucial building blocks of research available to any and all scientists with an interest in ACC. By consolidating the animal models and cell lines at one non-profit institution with an expertise in managing them, ACCRF will achieve this goal in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

In sum, the SPORE meetings provided an exceptional opportunity to

- monitor trends in cancer research and funding
- network with the key scientists focused on head & neck cancer
- make researchers aware of growing interest in ACC
- provide feedback to researchers on patient perspectives
- encourage collaboration among interested observers
- drive forward ACCRF's Research Agenda