

# Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Survivor & Caregiver Panel

The Hirshberg Foundation is happy to welcome a panel of patients and caregivers to share their cancer stories with us at the 17th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer.

We are honored, each year, to share the stories of pancreatic cancer patients and caregivers. These honest and personal discussions give us all perspective, insight and sensitivity to the journey of both patients and loved ones once someone in the family is diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. This year we have an amazing line up of two survivors, Jay Sandler and Judith Anne Desjardins, and two caregivers, Shirley Peppers and Leslie Nelson to be moderated by Jenny Tran, PhD.

Dr. Tran works at the Simms/Mann Center, in addition to providing support within the UCLA Alhambra Cancer care clinic, and co-manages the psychosocial care within the UCLA Advanced GI Cancer Program. She provides a monthly online orientation for patients and family members to learn about the supportive care services available to them, including information about the Simms/Mann Center, Palliative Care, and Nutrition Oncology.

**Jay Sandler, Survivor,** Diagnosed December, 2012

I was born in Boston and came out to California in 1987. I have two Berkeley Grads, a boy and a girl and have 3 grandkids. I am an accountant by training working as a Controller in manufacturing firms and along the way I owned a Dunkin Donut and an Orange Julius. I'm currently working with friends at the Canopy Cancer Collective as we started an online peer-to-peer [Pancreatic Cancer Support Group](#) through AnCan that meets on the 4th Thursday each month at 5:00PM (Pacific).

**Judith Anne Desjardins, Survivor, Diagnosed October 7, 2020**

I have been an Oncology Social Worker (1976-78), the wife of a prostate cancer patient (wrote the book, "Our Journey with Prostate Cancer: Empowering Strategies for Patients and Families" 2014), and produced the video "How To Beat Cancer in A Holistic Way" about my pancreatic cancer journey (2020 – present). I am cancer-free 29 months and have a holistic psychotherapy [practice](#).

**Shirley Peppers, Caregiver, wife of Roger Fox, diagnosed May 2018**

Roger was diagnosed five years ago and has been cancer free since his Whipple surgery in February 2019. He has continued to work as a money manager, investor and CPA. I retired in 2018 from a fundraising career for Stanford, Harvard and UCLA. I am now an artist.

After Roger's diagnosis, I was on a panel with other classmates – two doctors and a cancer survivor – for our 50th Reunion. I talked about my role as a caregiver and that the grief and concern we feel for our loved one can't be avoided. Also, I was introduced to a woman whose husband was also struggling with the after-effects of pancreatic cancer. We had phone conversations every few weeks which was invaluable to both of us to have someone to connect with in a similar situation. During the last few months, I have amped up my exercise routine substantially and it has moderated the anxiety and the circular worrying. Roger continues cancer free and is slowly getting more energy.

**Leslie Nelson, Caregiver, daughter of Dr. Norman Carabet, diagnosed January, 2016**

Our father Norman was a very healthy and active 82-year-old retired doctor at the time of diagnosis. His father was

diagnosed with pancreatic cancer at 94. The fact that our father was a doctor was both a blessing and a curse. It gave him the ability to recognize symptoms early on. Yet it also made it impossible for him to not “manage” some of his healthcare alongside his Oncologist which wasn’t always in his best interest. Post diagnosis our father continued to live his life as fully as possible with a positive attitude. He traveled, enjoyed the company of his family and friends, built models and spent as much time as possible on his boat relaxing in the sun. Nothing made him happier than to share his knowledge with his grandchildren and then watch them as they applied those lessons in their own life. Throughout his journey he continued in his role as our patriarch and our hero.

We look forward to hosting this uplifting and informative **Panel Discussion: Perspectives from Survivors and Caregivers.**

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## **Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Dr. KaKit P. Hui to discuss integrative East-West medicine for optimized health & wellness**

The Hirshberg Foundation is happy to announce KaKit P. Hui, MD will be joining us at the 17th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to review Integrative East-West Medicine to Optimize Health & Wellness.

Stress-related problems are widespread for both cancer patients and their families. The person-centered, integrative East-West model will be helpful in these challenging times. The Center for East West Medicine at UCLA offers world-class medical care for both hospitalized and ambulatory patients in several locations, blending the best of modern Western and traditional Chinese medicine.

Ka-Kit Hui, M.D., F.A.C.P. is the Wallis Annenberg Professor in Integrative East-West Medicine and Founder and Director of the Center for East-West Medicine at the Department of Medicine of the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. Dr. Hui, a Fellow of the American College of Physicians, is an internationally acclaimed educator and researcher and is board-certified in Internal Medicine and Clinical Pharmacology, with an expertise in Geriatrics. He is a recognized authority on Chinese Medicine and integrative medicine, and is bilingual in Chinese and English. Since 1990s, Dr. Hui has served as an advisor to the World Health Organization (WHO) in different areas, including Standard Terminology in Traditional Chinese Medicine, Appropriate Integration of Traditional and Complementary Medicine (T&CM or TCM) into Health Systems and Health Care Services, and Quality of Academic Education in Traditional Medicine. He has also provided consultation to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), National Institutes of Health (NIH), health insurance companies, drug companies and the media, and has held visiting and honorary professorships in various universities throughout the world.

In December 1993, Dr. Hui founded the UCLA Center for East-West Medicine, which is one of the first integrative medicine centers in the United States. His basic and clinical investigations, as well clinical practices as both generalist and consultant, have provided him with unique insights into the concepts of regulation, homeostasis and balance, as well as the

complementarity of modern medicine and traditional Chinese medicine. He has developed a model system of comprehensive care that is a patient-centered, problem-solving approach emphasizing health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, and is safe, effective, affordable and accessible to all. The Center's clinical program receives referrals from more than 500 physicians within UCLA for refractory problems, including many pain conditions, and continues to expand to meet the demand for a holistic patient care model within UCLA. Dr. Hui understands the importance of disseminating the Center's innovative healthcare model so that more people can benefit from it. The Center's extensive education programs offer fellowships, rotations, classes, workshops, conferences and events to physicians, medical residents, health care professionals, medical and non-medical students, and community members throughout the year.

We are privileged and honored to have Dr. Hui present **Integrative East-West Medicine to Optimize Health & Wellness.**

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## **Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Dr. Jenny Tran to discuss managing cancer related anxiety**

The Hirshberg Foundation is excited to announce Jenny Tran, PhD will be joining us at the 17th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to discuss turning down the volume on worry to manage

cancer related anxiety.

Cancer is a significant life stressor often accompanied by an increase in worry and anxiety. This presentation focuses on understanding how these responses can manifest themselves and impact patients. It will also offer patients and families a range of strategies to lessen the burden of worry and anxiety when it no longer serves us.

Jenny shares, "As the Clinical Psychology Postdoctoral Fellow, I have the privilege of providing comprehensive assessment and psychosocial care to patients and family members touched by cancer, in addition to providing multidisciplinary consultation in medical settings to other members of the healthcare team. Through an integration of evidence-based interventions and a human-centered approach, I attempt to meet patients where they are, to provide them with extra tools to navigate the cancer experience, and to create a space that integrates their strengths and values so that they feel genuinely seen and heard throughout their cancer care."

Dr. Tran works at the Simms/Mann Center, in addition to providing support within the UCLA Alhambra Cancer care clinic, and co-manages the psychosocial care within the UCLA Advanced GI Cancer Program. She provides a monthly online orientation for patients and family members to learn about the supportive care services available to them, including information about the Simms/Mann Center, Palliative Care, and Nutrition Oncology.

After receiving a B.A. in psychology from University of California, San Diego, Dr. Tran worked for two years as a behavioral interventionist with children and adolescents with neurodevelopmental disorders. Through this role, she cultivated an interest in working with family members and caregivers who are actively involved in the care of their loved ones. Dr. Tran

received extensive clinical training through several pre-internships including a life-changing year providing psychosocial care to patients with cancer here at the Simms/Mann Center. Her experience working with complex medical conditions highlighted the importance of understanding patient's needs through a biopsychosocial lens and the advantages of working with other members in a care team. Dr. Tran shares, "It is an immense honor to be invited into the lives of our patients and family, and to walk alongside them in this journey."

Providing patient with emotional support tools throughout treatment is an important piece to overall health and we are happy to have Dr. Jenny Tran present **Turning Down the Volume on Worry: Managing Cancer Related Anxiety.**

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## **The 5-Year Survival Rate Continues an Upward Trajectory to 12%**

The ACS statistics released today show an increase in the 5-year survival rate for all stages, revealing it to be 12% for the first time ever. The 5-year survival rate for pancreatic cancer survivors remained in the single digits for far too long but for the first time since 2017, we've seen survival rates increase two years in a row. Thanks to the [American Cancer Society's \(ACS\) Annual Cancer Facts & Figures Report](#), we're beginning to witness a shift. The results demonstrate something our Founder, Agi Hirshberg, has shared time and again, **"Never Give Up: The journey continues but an end is in sight."**

As the first Foundation to ever fund pancreatic cancer research, we offer a positive and hopeful message rather than focusing on statistics. There is value in understanding this important data, however, we've also seen survivors beat the odds and that is equally important to keep patients and families hopeful. As part of our [Patient Support Programs](#), our 2021 webinar, [Celebrate and Learn from 10, 20 and 30-year Survivors of Pancreatic Cancer](#), proved to be an extraordinary learning experience as these survivors, who continue to thrive today, shared their unique and personal journeys.

On the research front, Executive Director, Lisa Manheim, shares, **"We have the brightest in the world focusing on the disease and the change in these statistics reflects all of our hard work as a community. Witnessing this change in the statistics will hopefully be gratifying for our supporters who continue to fight for a cure and our patients who deserve to live a long and healthy life."** Our recent funding of [8 new Seed Grants](#) continues to drive research and advance our understanding of this disease. With projects focused on therapy and immunotherapy, early detection, and cancer biology, our teams of researchers in leading medical institutions are striving to improve patient outcomes. Learn more about these Seed Grant projects in the most recent edition of our [Momentum Newsletter](#).

Pancreatic cancer remains the third-leading cause of cancer-related deaths and the ACS Facts & Figures report shows us that an estimated 64,050 Americans will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer this year, an increase of nearly 3% since 2022. However, there is hope and we are a community that Never Gives Up. It is important for each of us to [take action today](#). Make 2023 the year to establish a personal cancer prevention plan by learning the [risk factors](#). If you or someone you know has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, [contact us](#) today.

While the ACS report confirms that we are headed in the right direction, it reaffirms the critical need for our work to continue. As this new data is reviewed, we encourage you to be proactive and utilize the many resources available to our community. [Read more on the ACS report →](#)

## **Resources for Patients, Preventions, and Education**

[One-on-One Support](#)

[Patient & Family Webinars](#)

[Genetic Testing](#)

[Clinical Trials](#)

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# **Momentum Newsletter: Winter 2022**

From returning to a full roster of in-person events to commemorating 25 years of progress towards a cure, the year has filled us with hope and gratitude. It is thanks to our community and your unwavering support that we can celebrate research advancements, improved patient care and support for all those facing pancreatic cancer. This year, we renew our passion to find a cure and are filled with gratitude for the robust community that supports us.

## **25 Years of Progress**

We have spent much of this year reflecting on the progress we have made over the past 25 year. As we look towards the future, our motto guides the path ahead: “Never Give Up! Finding a cure

is worth fight for!” It is thanks to the support of our community that we have fulfilled four of our five mission pillars and have made tangible improvements for patients and families. While our journey towards a cure continues, it is with hope and gratitude that we look toward a cancer-free future for all.

[Learn more about our 25 years →](#)

## **A New Roster of Seed Grants Brings Promise**

Our commitment to fund innovative pancreatic cancer research continues with a new roster of Seed Grant Awardees. These eight outstanding projects range from investigating how a digestive enzyme could be used as an early detection screening tool, to better understanding the immune systems of long-term survivors for clues to help with treatment, to targeting iron to create an anti-tumor response. These impressive researchers will deepen our knowledge of pancreatic cancer, create new treatment avenues, and improve patient outcomes. We are optimistic for the advances that will come from these bright minds!

[Read About Our Seed Grant Awardees →](#)

## **Our Partnership with the APA**

Each November, we begin Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month at the American Pancreatic Association (APA) meeting. The annual APA meeting brings together an international group of scientists and clinicians to identify the best course of treatment and discuss the most up- to-date research results for pancreatic diseases. The Hirshberg Opening Symposium at the APA meeting has allowed

us to bring crucial topics such as the importance of nutrition and psychosocial care to an international stage. Our longstanding relationship with the APA has helped foster the scientific research needed to drive us towards a cure for pancreatic cancer and improve patient outcomes across the globe.

[Learn more about the APA →](#)

## **25th LA Cancer Challenge 5K Walk/Run held at UCLA**

Our 25th walk/run was held on the beautiful campus of UCLA where we celebrated 25 years of progress and patient care! The LA Cancer Challenge was filled with warm embraces, incredible milestones and the joy of working to make a difference for our pancreatic cancer community. To date, the LACC has raised over \$10.1 million for pancreatic cancer research and programs. Thank you to all our walkers, runners, donors, volunteers, and sponsors who reminded us to “Never Give Up: Let’s Fight to the Finish!”

[Support our LACC participants →](#)

## **Training is Underway for the 2023 LA Marathon**

The Hirshberg Training Team offers an exciting fitness challenge for runners of all levels (couch-potatoes included) who are passionate about the pancreatic cancer community. With the Hirshberg Training Team you get personalized training, one-on-one access to our amazing coaches who have helped thousands cross the finish line, a pre-race luxury suite (with clean, warm

bathrooms) and a post-race celebration dinner. Running a marathon is an extraordinary achievement; running to fight pancreatic cancer is life changing.

[Join the Hirshberg Training Team →](#)

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## 25 Years of Progress

For 25 years, the Hirshberg Foundation has set out to fulfill our five mission pillars; each represents a critical milestone that has had a ripple effect for patients and families around the world. Thanks to our fundraising efforts, community participation and generous donors, our hard work has resulted in extraordinary scientific discoveries and patient programs that help guide survivors. To date, we have committed millions of dollars to pancreatic cancer research and have seen improved treatments, outcomes, and quality of life for patients. One final piece of the puzzle remains: **finding a cure**. We celebrate 25 years of progress as our mantra guides the path ahead: “Never Give Up! Finding a Cure is Worth Fighting for.”

### Pillar 1:

To create a premier Pancreatic Cancer Center where all needs of pancreatic cancer patients can be met in one location with the most advanced treatment options.

We have made this a reality through our UCLA Labs and the UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Cancer Diseases. Comprised of 3 laboratories, tissue bank and an Integrated Practice Unit where patients are seen by a team of experts united in their

care, our UCLA Center has influenced pancreas-focused institutions across the globe.

[Watch more about the UCLA Labs →](#)

## Pillar 2:

To fund projects and programs designed to improve patient care, treatment and, ultimately, pancreatic cancer survival rates. Through our Seed Grant program, the UC Pancreatic Cancer Consortium (UCPCC), our relationship with the [American Pancreatic Association \(APA\)](#), and an emphasis on collaboration, we have seen survival rates improve.

Our Seed Grant program funds innovative research in its early stages and has resulted in over \$130 million in National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding. The UCPCC brings together 5 cancer centers to share their work and collaborate towards a cure. The annual APA meeting brings together an international group of scientists and clinicians to identify the best course of treatment and discuss the most up-to-date research results for pancreatic diseases. These partnerships are helping to accelerate the progress and impact of the research being done while translating that research into improved patient care.

[Learn more about the UCPCC →](#)

[Watch more about our partnership with the APA →](#)

[See our 2022-2023 Seed Grant Awardees →](#)

## Pillar 3:

To be recognized as a patient support reference source for pancreatic cancer patients and their families.

A cornerstone of the Hirshberg Foundation is helping patients and their families navigate a pancreatic cancer diagnosis. What began with Agi sharing her experiences with other families has evolved into a robust program that includes a dedicated Patient & Family Support Specialist, a wealth of online resources, our annual Symposium and more. Our relationships with doctors around the world mean that we can provide referrals and support, and that each call is answered by someone who has been through it. Our patient support program has always been a beacon of hope for patients and families facing this disease.

[Learn more about how we support patients & families →](#)

## **Pillar 4:**

To integrate and unite generations, young and old, through physical fitness participation, while creating public awareness and raising money to find a cure for pancreatic cancer.

In the spirit of Ron Hirshberg, our fundraising events have always centered around fitness activities for the whole family. After losing his father to pancreatic cancer, Jon Hirshberg began planning our first event, a 5K race to honor his father's memory. For the past 25 years, our fundraising events have given the pancreatic cancer community a chance to honor loved ones, celebrate and support survivors, and create awareness. Now, our three signature fundraising events, the LA Cancer Challenge, the Tour de Pier and the Hirshberg Training Team, have raised over \$20 million to date.

[Watch more about the LA Cancer Challenge, the event that started it all →](#)

## Pillar 5:

To find a cure for pancreatic cancer in honor of Ron Hirshberg and the thousands of people who are diagnosed with this disease each year.

The final pillar is yet to be accomplished, and we will not stop until our entire mission is complete. All of these accomplishments are steps towards our ultimate goal of finding a cure for pancreatic cancer. It is thanks to the support of our community that we commemorate 25 years of extraordinary scientific discoveries while providing support services for patients around the world.

[Join us and give today →](#)

[Watch more about our 25 years of progress →](#)