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Ludwig Fund Gives \$120 Million for Cancer Research

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Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center Among the Recipients

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center is one of six leading institutions that will share in a \$120 million gift from a foundation created by American billionaire Daniel K. Ludwig. Each of the six US centers will receive \$20 million cash this year, plus stock in a New York real estate holding company, to create the Ludwig Centers. This significant gift, believed to be the largest single gift for cancer research by a US foundation, combined with further distributions from the Ludwig Fund over the next six years, should ensure that each Ludwig Center receives annual research funds of approximately \$2 million in perpetuity.

“Support from the Ludwig Fund is enabling us to develop a state-of-the-art center focusing on cancer immunotherapy,” said James Allison, PhD, Director of the Ludwig Center at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and a renowned leader in the field of immunology, “More specifically, it is accelerating the pace at which we can move the findings of basic scientific studies into translational work, so we can evaluate promising new diagnostic approaches and innovative therapies in people with cancer.”

Lloyd J. Old, MD, Chairman of the Fund’s Trustees, says that Mr. Ludwig believed the control of cancer required the same elements he found essential in his own endeavors - outstanding individuals given the necessary resources to meet any challenge. “The Directors of the Ludwig Centers are some of the most eminent figures in US cancer research today, and combining their talents with those of the global Ludwig Institute creates a powerful force in cancer research. The Trustees believe that a collaborative ‘Ludwig Cancer’ network can accelerate the translation of the most promising areas of research into new cancer therapies.”

Edward A. McDermott, Jr., another Trustee and also President of the Ludwig Institute, adds that a key goal for the Trustees was to distribute the Fund in such a way as to try and ensure financial stability for each Ludwig Center. “Mr. Ludwig’s gift will enable the groundbreaking work of the Centers to proceed with the flexibility afforded by unrestricted research support and independent of fluctuations in government funding.”

Daniel K. Ludwig, who died in 1992, was ranked consistently among the richest men in the world in the 1960s and 70s, and was the top-ranked American on the first-ever Forbes 400 List in 1982. He believed strongly that cancer was one of humanity’s great challenges and that a concerted worldwide effort was needed to conquer the disease. Accordingly, Mr. Ludwig gave the vast majority of his wealth to cancer research. In 1971, he established the international Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research — which has expended more than \$1.1 billion of its own funds in support of cancer research since its inception — and he bequeathed substantially all of his estate to endow the Ludwig Fund.

The Ludwig Centers and their Directors are:

- Ludwig Center at Dana-Farber/Harvard: George D. Demetri, MD, led one of the first pivotal clinical trials to demonstrate that therapies targeting a specific mutant protein can extend cancer patient survival. The Dana-Farber Cancer Institute/Harvard Medical School team is now designing and implementing scientific studies that expand knowledge gained in early drug development trials.
- Ludwig Center at Johns Hopkins: Kenneth Kinzler, PhD, and Bert Vogelstein, MD, are consistently ranked among the top most-cited cancer researchers in the world and have just published the most comprehensive study to date identifying gene mutations in breast and [colon cancers](#). The Johns Hopkins University Kimmel Cancer Center team will continue to focus on the genetic underpinnings of cancer and how to use these discoveries to improve cancer patient care.
- Ludwig Center at Memorial Sloan Kettering: James P. Allison, PhD, is a renowned leader in the field of immunology and particularly in the development of novel therapeutic concepts that harness the immune system to fight cancer. The Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center team is evaluating several innovative cancer immunological approaches, now in clinical trials, to identify promising new ways to diagnose and treat people with cancer.
- Ludwig Center at MIT: Robert A. Weinberg, PhD, is an internationally recognized authority on the genetic basis of human cancer, having isolated

the first human cancer-causing gene and the first known tumor suppressor gene. The MIT team will focus particularly on the understanding of metastasis, the spread of cancer.

- Ludwig Center at Stanford University: Irving Weissman, MD, and his colleagues were the first to identify and isolate normal adult (or tissue-specific) stem cells and have since identified the malignant counterparts of these cells in leukemia and solid tumors such as [breast cancer](#). The Stanford University team is working to isolate cancer stem cells in all human cancers and develop new therapies that target these cells to eliminate the disease at its source.
- Ludwig Center at The University of Chicago: Geoffrey L. Greene, PhD, a leader in the study of steroid hormones and their specific receptors, and Ralph R. Weichselbaum, MD, a pioneer in radiation-targeted gene therapy, have formed a team to find novel ways to direct radiolabeled hormones to their receptors to detect the spread of cancer and deliver precision radiotherapy or other treatments to metastases in specific organs.

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