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Noted Philanthropist Sidney Kimmel Recognized With AACR Distinguished Public Service Award

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PHILADELPHIA — The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) will honor Sidney Kimmel with an AACR Distinguished Public Service Award for his lifelong extraordinary philanthropic commitment to advances in cancer research, for fostering the careers of young researchers, and for his steadfast advocacy on behalf of cancer research for the benefit of cancer patients.

The Distinguished Public Service Award honors the extraordinary contributions of an individual or group whose groundbreaking, innovative work exemplifies the AACR’s mission to accelerate the prevention and cure of all cancers through research, education, communication, and collaboration. Distinguished public service takes many forms, and past winners have included generous philanthropists, government officials, advocates, and members of the media. Kimmel embodies the substance and spirit of this award.

Kimmel will be presented with the award at the [AACR Annual Meeting 2017](#) during the opening ceremony on Sunday, April 2, at 8:15 a.m. ET in Hall D-E of the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C.

“Mr. Kimmel has demonstrated unparalleled dedication to accelerating progress against cancer as evidenced by the generous contributions of the [Sidney Kimmel Foundation](#) to the long-term viability of leading comprehensive cancer centers around the country,” said Margaret Foti, PhD, MD (hc), chief executive officer of the AACR. “Moreover, the important research projects of countless numbers of cancer researchers, including more than 290 early-career investigators, have been launched and sustained through Mr. Kimmel’s generous support. As a champion of young scientists funded through his foundation, Mr. Kimmel’s benevolence assures us that the field of cancer research will continue to benefit from the innovation and pioneering efforts of these rising scientific stars in the cancer workforce. The American Association for Cancer Research is absolutely delighted to honor this giant in the field for his amazing, game-changing contributions.”

Kimmel is a committed philanthropist who established the Sidney Kimmel Foundation in 1993 to “connect promise to progress.” In 2010, Kimmel signed the Giving Pledge, the Warren Buffett and Bill Gates initiative encouraging America’s billionaires to contribute their substantial wealth to charitable endeavors. In confirming his commitment, Kimmel wrote that, in fact, he had fulfilled the Giving Pledge, “having given more than half my wealth to charitable causes, primarily cancer research. I have also committed, and reaffirm here, that the balance of my estate – other than what is needed to support my wife during her lifetime – will also be given to charity.”

According to the Foundation, of the \$850 million that Kimmel has donated to charitable causes, more than \$550 million has been directed to fund cancer research. In 1997, he established the Kimmel Scholars program to assist innovative cancer researchers in the early years of their careers. He recognized a “Catch-22” in the research funding system, i.e., that young scientists need grant money to establish their labs and conduct research but have not conducted sufficient independent research to qualify yet for grants. The Kimmel Scholars program provides each recipient \$200,000 to bridge that funding gap. Since its inception, hundreds of scientists have received these awards to stimulate their research and advance their careers; clearly the program has given birth to new generations of our nation’s leading cancer researchers.

Kimmel contributed \$157 million to the Johns Hopkins Cancer Center (now the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center) in Baltimore to promote research and patient care, as well as the construction of a residence to serve patients undergoing prolonged treatments and their families. In 2016, he partnered with former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg, and together they gave \$100 million to establish the Bloomberg~Kimmel Institute for Cancer Immunotherapy at Johns Hopkins to support transformative science and treatment in this promising field.

In his hometown of Philadelphia, Kimmel gave \$10 million to support physicians and scientists at Thomas Jefferson University’s Kimmel Cancer Center. In 2014, the Foundation gifted \$110 million to the university’s medical college, which was renamed the Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University in his honor.

His other major gifts have included \$25 million to fund the Sidney Kimmel Center for Prostate and Urologic Cancers at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York; \$24 million to establish a cancer think tank in San Diego which carried his name and is now part of the Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute; and \$25 million to Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C), a program of the Entertainment Industry Foundation. The AACR is the Scientific Partner of SU2C. Kimmel was the catalyst and lead sponsor of the 1998 March to Conquer Cancer in Washington, D.C., which advocated for increased federal funding for cancer research. “The March — Coming Together to Conquer Cancer” was a two-day national event where thousands of cancer survivors and their loved ones, researchers, cancer physicians, advocates, volunteers, celebrities, and government officials converged on Washington to demand that cancer be conquered. The AACR recognized Kimmel’s support of the event with an award at that time.

Kimmel’s philanthropic efforts extend beyond cancer research and reflect his dedication to his hometown, as well as the performing arts and Jewish education and continuity. His first major contribution was to pledge \$12 million in 1993 to the campaign to build a new performing arts center in Philadelphia, designed to be among the first seeds of a revitalization of the downtown area. That pledge grew to \$63 million, the largest gift to what is now the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, home of the Philadelphia Orchestra and a performing arts magnet for the city.

Kimmel gave \$5.5 million to the University of Missouri to establish the Sidney Kimmel Institute for Nuclear Renaissance in 2012. The institute's scientists focus their research on low-energy nuclear reactions and other technologies with the goal of developing clean energy alternatives.

Kimmel has made major endowment gifts to the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia and the Raymond and Ruth Perelman Jewish Day School; funded the construction of the Kimmel Theater at the National Constitution Center; provided significant funding to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington; and was the lead donor to the National Museum of American Jewish History, prominently located on Independence Mall in Philadelphia.

Kimmel is founder of the Jones Apparel Group and chairman of Sidney Kimmel Entertainment, which has produced more than 40 feature films. Kimmel landed his first jobs in the garment business – as an inventory clerk and a traveling salesman for a women's wear manufacturer – after serving two tours in the U.S. Army and briefly attending Temple University. He became a knitwear designer, then president and CEO of the clothing company Villager, before starting his own clothing line, Jones New York, which became a lead designer and marketer of apparel, footwear, and accessories in the New York fashion industry. Kimmel began his philanthropic work in earnest in 1991, when Jones New York went public. He stepped down as CEO in 2002, remaining as chairman of the company until 2014, when Sycamore Partners bought it for nearly \$2.2 billion.

His generosity has also been recognized through the following honors: the 2011 Visionary Award from the UCLA Department of Neurosurgery, the 2005 Medal of Honor for Cancer Philanthropy from the American Cancer Society, the 2003 Americanism Award from the Anti-Defamation League, the 2002 Musser Award for Excellence in Leadership from Temple University Fox School of Business, the 2002 honoree at the Parsons New School of Design Benefit and Fashion Show, the 2000 National Human Relations Award from the American Jewish Committee, and the 1999 Humanitarian Award from the American Cancer Society.

Kimmel and his wife, Caroline, reside in California.

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