



Tuesday, April 8, 2014
Contact: Mark Shelton
508.856.2000
mark.shelton@umassmed.edu

RESEARCH FUND RENAMED TO HONOR PAUL CELLUCCI

UMass ALS Champion Fund, which the late Governor helped establish, renamed “UMass ALS Cellucci Fund.”

WORCESTER, MA – The UMass ALS Champion Fund is now the UMass ALS Cellucci Fund, UMass Medical School Chancellor Michael F. Collins has announced.

The UMass ALS Cellucci Fund will continue to raise philanthropic support for research at UMass Medical School (UMMS) into amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) or Lou Gehrig’s disease, the illness that claimed former Massachusetts Governor Paul Cellucci’s life in June of 2013. Raising funds to support research into ALS at UMMS was the idea of Gov. Cellucci and his wife, Jan. “While the name of the Fund will change, its purpose, and our mission, will not,” said Chancellor Collins. “At UMass Medical School, we are dedicated to the proposition that treatments and cures for ALS will be discovered through research and we are committed to doing all we can to find answers for this most challenging disease.”

“In establishing the initiative, Paul wanted to shine a light on UMass Medical School and the important work of Dr. Brown,” said Jan Cellucci. “He also wanted to give hope to those patients and family members struggling with ALS. The Cellucci family is honored to have Paul’s legacy recognized with the Cellucci Fund.”

It was not long after Gov. Cellucci was diagnosed with ALS that he discovered a new calling, one that fit with his long legacy of public service as an elected official and diplomat. He was so impressed with the work of his physician, UMass Medical School Professor Robert H. Brown Jr., DPhil, MD, the *Leo P. and Theresa M. LaChance Chair in Medical Research*, and chair of neurology, that Gov. Cellucci pledged to help raise money to support Dr. Brown’s research. “It

was clear to me after the first couple of appointments with Dr. Brown, that I was with the best person in the world to be treating ALS,” Gov. Cellucci said at the time. “He’s just someone who will leave no stone unturned in trying to help his patients. I was very impressed with that and I told him early on I would like to help raise money for his research to continue.”

“Thanks to Governor Cellucci’s dedicated efforts, there has never been a more promising time in ALS research,” said Dr. Brown. “Scientists at UMass Medical School, in collaboration with partners from across the world, are working tirelessly to discover new ALS genes and, at the same time, are pursuing projects that have direct bearing on therapy discovery. It is a privilege to be able to memorialize Governor Cellucci’s commitment to finding a cure for ALS with the rebranding of the Champion Fund to the UMass ALS Cellucci Fund.”

Gov. Cellucci oversaw an effort that has had immediate impact on the ALS research being conducted in Dr. Brown’s laboratory at UMass Medical School. Gov. Cellucci enjoyed the support of prominent business and political leaders, including Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick, all of the former governors of the commonwealth, former Lieutenant Gov. Timothy Murray and former White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card. As chair of the campaign, Gov. Cellucci played a role in securing a number of major gifts, including a \$500,000 donation from Biogen Idec in 2012.

In recognition of the critical need for new treatments for ALS, the Champion Fund, now the UMass ALS Cellucci Fund, is a movement to drive awareness and funding for the ALS breakthroughs happening at UMMS and in the laboratory of Dr. Brown, one of the world’s leading ALS researchers. The UMass ALS Cellucci Fund will help Dr. Brown and his colleagues pursue ALS research leads and breakthroughs that might otherwise take years to attract funding from traditional sources. As a result, the UMass ALS Cellucci Fund helps researchers at UMMS be prepared to seize the moment when highly promising ALS discoveries are made.

To date, the UMass ALS Cellucci Fund has raised more than \$2 million for ALS research at UMMS. Gifts have come from across the state and North America.

To learn more about the Cellucci Fund, visit www.umassals.com

To learn more about UMass Medical School, visit www.umassmed.edu

The University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS), one of five campuses of the University system, is comprised of the School of Medicine, the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, the Graduate School of Nursing, a thriving research enterprise and an innovative public service initiative, Commonwealth Medicine. Its mission is to advance the health of the people of the commonwealth through pioneering education, research, public service and health care delivery with its clinical partner, UMass Memorial Health Care. In doing so, it has built a reputation as a world-class research institution and as a leader in primary care education. The Medical School attracts more than \$240 million annually in research funding, placing it among the top 50 medical schools in the nation. In 2006, UMMS's Craig C. Mello, PhD, Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator and the *Blais University Chair in Molecular Medicine*, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, along with colleague Andrew Z. Fire, PhD, of Stanford University, for their discoveries related to RNA interference (RNAi). The 2013 opening of the Albert Sherman Center ushered in a new era of biomedical research and education on campus. Designed to maximize collaboration across fields, the Sherman Center is home to scientists pursuing novel research in emerging scientific fields with the goal of translating new discoveries into innovative therapies for human diseases.