

Remembering: Dr. Pierre Massion



A message from Vanderbilt University as we mourn the loss of a friend and colleague

<https://news.vumc.org/2021/04/06/vanderbilt-mourns-the-passing-of-pierre-massion/>

Science Throwback: Dr. Arul Chinnaiyan was elected to the National Academy of Sciences

Dr. Arul Chinnaiyan, S.P. Hicks Endowed Professor of Pathology and a Professor of Urology at the University of Michigan Medical School, was elected to the National Academy of Sciences. The National Academy of Sciences announced the election of the 120 members and 26 international members in recognition of their distinguished and continuing achievements in original research. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) is a private, nonprofit organization of the country's leading researchers. The NAS recognizes and promotes outstanding science through election to membership; publication in its journal, PNAS; and its awards, programs, and special activities. Through the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, the NAS provides objective, science-based advice on critical issues affecting the nation



Dr. Chinnaiyan is a molecular pathologist and physician scientist at the leading edge of translational cancer research and precision oncology. He is an Investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, American Cancer Society Research Professor, and founding Director of the Michigan Center for Translational Pathology. He is best known for the discovery of TMPRSS2-ETS gene fusions in a majority of prostate cancers, the first causative gene fusion in a common solid tumor. He has received several honors including the Paul Marks Prize for Cancer Research, the NCI Outstanding Investigator Award, and was inducted into the AACR Academy Class of 2020. He is a member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation, Association of American Physicians, American Association for the Advancement of Sciences, National Academy of Inventors, National Academy of Medicine, and the National Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Chinnaiyan is PI of the EDRN Biomarker Developmental Lab at the University of Michigan and serves as co-Chair of the EDRN Executive Committee. His lab has focused on functional genomic and bioinformatic approaches to study cancer for the purposes of understanding tumor biology as well as to discover genetic drivers and biomarkers of cancer. His lab discovered that a majority of prostate cancers harbor gene fusions of TMPRSS2 fused to ETS transcription factors. This discovery was made using a bioinformatics approach to detect outlier genes in an aggregated tumor gene expression database called ONCOMINE, developed by his group. TMPRSS2-ETS gene fusions are exquisitely specific markers of prostate cancer as well as the initiating driver alteration for this disease. Since their discovery in prostate cancer, a number of other common solid tumors have been found to have subsets that harbor recurrent gene fusions including lung cancer, breast cancer, and colon cancer, among others. In 2011, his group established the first integrative, comprehensive clinical sequencing approach for advanced cancer patients called MI-ONCOSEQ, which has served as a paradigm for cancer precision medicine. Through these efforts, he has characterized a number of important cancer targets/biomarkers including EZH2, AMACR, FGFR/RAF kinase fusions, ESR1, CDK12, FOXA1, and long non-coding RNAs.

EDRN Scientific Accomplishment at the BSA

Dr. Phil Castle, Division of Cancer Prevention Director,

"For those who did not hear, all three of our concepts, CAP-IT, Cascade, and EDRN (renewal), were approved and strongly, enthusiastically endorsed by the BSA. We could not have done better. It was a great week for your DCP. None of this happens without the collective commitment of the *whole* DCP team. Stronger together, the hard work that everyone put into these concepts made a huge difference.

I want to congratulate Shizuko Sei, Vikrant Sahasrabuddhe, and Sudhir Srivastava and the EDRN team on their successes and thank them for their hard work and dedication. You were all pushed very hard, you responded with your "A" game, and the dividends speak for themselves. We can build on this and keep our momentum going. I hope that you take the time over the weekend to celebrate and bask in the moment. I could not be more proud of your accomplishments."

Science Trivia

In what organ of the human body does pheochromocytomas occur?

Answer: B: Adrenal Gland

- A: Hypothalamus
- B: Adrenal Gland
- C: The ovaries
- D: Thyroid

Upcoming Meetings

May 2021 - HTAN Steering Committee Meeting
June 2021 - Commonfund

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