

PRESS RELEASE

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO TREATMENT OF LEUKEMIA

DKMS STIFTUNG LEBEN SPENDEN HONORS THE DUTCH PHYSICIAN AND RESEARCHER PROF. FRED FALKENBURG WITH THE PRESTIGIOUS MECHTILD HARF SCIENCE AWARD

Tübingen, Germany, November 9, 2020 – To honor his achievements as one of the most important researchers in the field of transplant immunology, DKMS Stiftung Leben Spenden (DKMS Foundation for Giving Life) awards Fred Falkenburg with the Mechtild Harf Science Award 2020. The Dutch physician has made seminal contributions to the treatment of leukemia with donor T-cells. He is the 19th recipient of the annual 10,000 € prize which recognizes exceptional scientific work of internationally renowned physicians in the field of stem cell donation. Falkenburg donated the prize money to the Charity Fund of the Department of Hematology at the Leiden University Medical Center (LUMC).

Scientific research is vital in helping to understand the treatment of blood cancer and improve the survival rate of patients. “It is a great pleasure for us, to honor Fred Falkenburg’s outstanding achievements especially in describing graft-versus-leukemia reactions at a cellular and molecular level and in developing novel immunological strategies to improve the outcome of allogeneic blood stem cell transplantation”, said Marcel van den Brink, chairman DKMS Stiftung Leben Spenden Foundation Board.

J. H. Fred Falkenburg is Professor of Hematology and Deputy Head of the Department of Hematology at Leiden University Medical Center (LUMC) and one of the most important researchers in the field of immunotherapy of hematological diseases. The results of research programs on bone marrow transplantation and immunotherapy of hematological malignancies in the Laboratory of Experimental Hematology at LUMC conducted under his direction have been translated into clinical success for the benefit of patients. LUMC has a long history in the treatment of blood cancer and was involved in the first successful bone marrow transplant carried out on a leukemia patient in 1968. Falkenburg has greatly contributed to finding better therapies during the last 32 years at the center. The renowned physician has published more than 300 articles and received numerous prestigious awards. In 2018, he has been appointed Director of the Dutch Cancer Society.

Falkenburg combines clinical Hematology with both basic and translational research. He is especially interested in the development of new immunological strategies to improve the outcome of allogeneic stem cell transplantation. Falkenburg’s current research focuses on the combination of stem cell and T-cell therapy, which provides the patient or recipient with new haematopoietic cells and also cellular

immunotherapy. Falkenburg is investigating the best way to prevent these lymphocytes from being directed against the recipient, which triggers the so-called "Graft-versus-Host Disease" (GvHD).

"I am truly honored to receive the DKMS Mechtild Harf Science Award. It is an even greater honor to be placed in such distinguished ranks as those of the past honorees, all of whom have made important contributions to improve the treatment of blood cancer", Falkenburg said. "Furthermore, I am very pleased to help fund research on Leukemia, lymphoma and multiple myeloma by donating the prize money to Doelfonds Leukemie van de Bontius Stichting, the Charity Fund of the Department of Hematology at the Leiden University Medical Center (LUMC)."

"As a leading organization in the fight against blood cancer, we are highly committed on the medical and scientific level to save as many patients' lives as possible. We want to help increase the chances of success during treatment," van den Brink added.

The award is named after Mechtild Harf, mother of two children, who lost her battle with leukemia. Her husband Peter Harf founded DKMS in 1991, which has since grown to become the world's largest network of donor centers.

Caption: DKMS Mechild Harf Science Award 2020

DKMS Mechtild Harf Science Award winner Prof. Fred Falkenburg

Photograph: Leiden University Medical Center

About DKMS

DKMS is an international non-profit organization dedicated to the fight against blood cancer. Founded in Germany in 1991 by Dr. Peter Harf, DKMS and the organization's over 900 employees have since relentlessly pursued the aim of giving as many patients as possible a second chance at life. With over 10 million registered donors, DKMS has succeeded in doing this more than 87,000 times to date by providing blood stem cell donations to those in need. This accomplishment has led to DKMS becoming the global leader in the facilitation of unrelated blood stem cell transplants. The organization has offices in Germany, the US, Poland, the UK and Chile. In India, DKMS has founded the joint venture DKMS-BMST together with the Bangalore Medical Services Trust, while in South Africa DKMS works together with its partner The Sunflower Fund. International expansion and collaboration is key to helping patients worldwide because like the organization itself, blood cancer knows no borders.

DKMS is also heavily involved in the fields of medicine and science, with its own research unit focused on continually improving the survival and recovery rate of patients. In its high-performance laboratory, the DKMS Life Science Lab, the organization sets worldwide standards in the typing of potential blood stem cell donors.

About DKMS Stiftung Leben Spenden (Foundation for Giving Life)

The DKMS Stiftung Leben Spenden is the parent organization of DKMS and focuses, among other things, on advancing research projects in the field of stem cell removal and transplantation. The DKMS Mechtild Harf Science Award has been presented since 2001 and honors the best scientific advances in this field.