

## **PRESS RELEASE**

# PIONEERING NEW CONCEPTS FOR TREATMENT OF ACUTE LEUKEMIA

### **ITALIAN PHYSICIAN AND RESEARCHER PROFESSOR MASSIMO MARTELLI RECEIVES THE PRESTIGIOUS MECHTILD HARF SCIENCE AWARD AT VIRTUAL CEREMONY**

**Tübingen, Germany, March 16, 2021 – DKMS Stiftung Leben Spenden (DKMS Foundation for Giving Life) honors Professor Massimo Fabrizio Martelli’s achievements in hematology and haploidentical stem cell transplantation with the Mechtild Harf Science Award 2021. The Italian physician has made seminal contributions to the treatment of patients with high-risk acute leukemia. Martelli is the 20th recipient of the annual €10,000 prize, which recognizes outstanding scientific work of internationally renowned physicians in the field of stem cell donation and transplantation.**

Innovative scientific research is a key factor in helping to understand blood cancer treatment and to improve the situation for patients. “It is a great pleasure for us to honor Massimo Martelli’s exceptional achievements. He is a visionary pioneer in haploidentical stem cell transplantation for patients with high-risk acute leukemia. His work on approaches to reduce the risk of graft-versus-host disease while preserving graft-versus-leukemia effects has been enormously fruitful for the development of medical science in this field,” said Professor Thomas Klingebiel, Chairman of the DKMS Medical Council, at the virtual Mechtild Harf Science Award ceremony on March 15, 2021.

Professor Martelli is a well-known and appreciated specialist in hematology. His multifaceted research activities led to groundbreaking discoveries that profoundly influenced clinical practice and have been translated into clinical success. Martelli facilitated successful stem cell transplantations for high-risk patients with acute leukemia without compatible donors and conducted the first successful clinical trial on haploidentical stem cell transplantation in 1993, and to this day his research has had a great impact on the lives of patients with blood cancer. During his long career, he has published more than 350 articles in international medical journals and received several prestigious scientific awards.

Martelli has been Professor at the University of Perugia and Head of the Department of Oncology and Hematology. During his 30 years at the university, together with a group of brilliant young scientists, Martelli established a department that achieved excellence in research and clinical care. Under his direction the Hematology Department has provided top-level care for patients from diagnosis to treatment, educated many renowned hematologists and made seminal contributions to medical science.

Since 2011, the eminent physician has been Emeritus Professor at the University of Perugia.

“I am sincerely honored by this recognition of my lifelong work, which has been so rewarding in and of itself. Being selected to receive the Mechtild Harf Science Award 2021 took me completely by surprise. It is with deep gratitude that I accept this prestigious honor and I am overwhelmed to follow in the illustrious footsteps of previous award winners,” said Martelli.

“As a leading organization in the fight against blood cancer, we are highly committed, at the medical and scientific level, to saving as many patients’ lives as possible. New and innovative approaches help to increase the chances of success,” Klingebiel added.

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

The recording of the virtual Mechtild Harf Science Award Ceremony during which DKMS Stiftung Leben Spenden also honored last year’s award winner, Professor Fred Falkenburg, is available at: [professional.dkms.org/MHSA202](http://professional.dkms.org/MHSA202).

### **Caption: DKMS Mechtild Harf Science Award 2021**

DKMS Mechtild Harf Science Award winner Professor Massimo Fabrizio Martelli

#### **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 900+ employees have since relentlessly pursued the aim of giving as many patients as possible a second chance at life. With over 10.5 million registered donors, DKMS has succeeded in doing this more than 90,000 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 are 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.