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## **Southwest Oncology Group chairman receives Sarcoma Foundation of America's Nobility in Science Award**

Laurence H. Baker, D.O., chairman of the Southwest Oncology Group and professor of Internal Medicine and Pharmacology at the University of Michigan, has received the Sarcoma Foundation of America's Nobility in Science Award. Dr. Baker was honored for his 34-year commitment to the advancement of scientific knowledge about sarcoma. The award was presented at the fourth annual Sarcoma Foundation of America gala dinner May 22 in New York City.

Sarcoma, one of the rarest types of cancers, affects bones, cartilage, fat, muscle, blood vessels and other connective or supportive tissue. In addition to his association with the Southwest Oncology Group and the University of Michigan, Dr. Baker is the executive director and president of SARC (the Sarcoma Alliance for Research through Collaboration). SARC's mission is to conduct clinical trials to improve the diagnosis and treatment of sarcoma, and to ultimately find a cure for this disease. The organization includes participants from 20 institutions with many physicians from various diagnostic and therapeutic disciplines whose practices are limited to sarcoma. In addition, SARC is committed to providing accurate and up-to-date information about sarcoma to physicians, patients and families affected by the disease.

Dr. Baker became chair of the Southwest Oncology Group, one of the nation's largest cancer clinical trials cooperative groups, in April 2005. He joined the Group in 1972 and has served in several capacities through the years, including chair-elect, associate chair and chair of the Intergroup Sarcoma Committee.

Dr. Baker graduated from Brooklyn College in New York City in 1962 and received his osteopathy degree from the University of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1966. He completed his oncology fellowship at Wayne State University in Detroit, then joined the faculty there in 1972. He became director of the Division of Hematology and Oncology from 1982-1992, and in 1987 accepted the directorship of the Meyer L. Prentis Comprehensive Cancer Center of Metropolitan Detroit.

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In 1994, Dr. Baker joined the University of Michigan as professor of medicine and associate chief of the Division of Hematology/Oncology in the Department of Internal Medicine. He also served as deputy director and director for clinical research for the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Dr. Baker has authored 200 publications for peer-reviewed journals, 47 books or book chapters and 139 abstracts. He also owns a patent on “Diagnosis and Treatment of Osteosarcoma,” which was registered in March 2002.

### **About sarcoma**

Soft-tissue sarcoma, the most common form of sarcoma, involves tumors that develop in the fat, muscle, nerve or fibrous tissues surrounding joints, blood vessels or deep skin tissues. This year about 9,560 new soft-tissue sarcomas are expected to be diagnosed and 3,500 will mostly likely die of the disease.

The most common bone sarcomas include osteosarcoma, Ewing’s family of tumors, and chondrosarcoma. Osteosarcoma and Ewing’s sarcoma occur in children as well as in young adults.

Kaposi Sarcoma, once thought to be a disease that affected elderly men of Mediterranean or Jewish heritage, organ transplant patients and young adult African men, is the first sarcoma known to be caused by a virus.

### **About the Southwest Oncology Group**

The Southwest Oncology Group is one of the largest cancer clinical trials cooperative research groups in the United States. The Group is a network of more than 5,000 physician-researchers located at nearly 550 institutions. In addition to their regular medical practices, Group investigators work together on clinical trials funded by the National Cancer Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, to prevent and treat cancer in adults. Among the Group’s institutions are 17 of the NCI’s 61 designated cancer centers. The Group enrolls nearly 7,200 patients each year and has about 120 clinical trials underway at any given time. The Southwest Oncology Group Headquarters Office is at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Mich., the Operations Office is in San Antonio, Texas, and the Statistical Center is in Seattle, Wash.

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