

Wednesday, 6 September 2023

Brenda Gallie

Category 2: Civil society

Impact

Internationally recognized ocular oncologist and scientist Dr. Brenda Gallie, has made extraordinary contributions to cancer control through research, advocacy, product development, patient support and care.

Dr. Gallie's 50-year commitment to improve outcomes for children with fatal retinoblastoma (RB) eye cancer has revolutionized the field of cancer control. Her bench-to-beside research has cured children and preserved vision. She (1) initiated tumor suppressor gene research with the discovery of somatic inactivation RB1 gene; (2) compared RB to its benign precursor, retinoma, revealing a novel pathway to malignant transformation ; (3) demonstrated the prognostic potential of oncogene KIF14 in lung and ovarian cancers; (4) championed an international task force to write the 8th edition Tumor Node Metastasis Cancer Staging System (TNM)

She has been dedicated to equitably translate research to point-of-care through innovation which has reduced retinoblastoma morbidity and mortality worldwide; (1) developed highly sensitive assays to detect RB1 gene mutations; (2) created a point-of-care digital tool to enhance quality of care, guidelines use, and provides quality clinical data for research; (3) leads a phase 1 clinical trial of a novel drug delivery method for retinoblastoma.

She led the SickKids Retinoblastoma Program for decades providing compassionate cutting-edge care to children from all over the world including developing a global network of hundreds of her ocular oncologist trainees.

Her advocacy includes leading the Canadian National Retinoblastoma Strategy to develop the world's first retinoblastoma care guidelines, patient prioritized research with a similar initiative in Kenya. She has been a Board Member Canadian Retinoblastoma Society since its inception and in this capacity, co-led countless advocacy and fundraising events. She co-founded One Retinoblastoma World to connect families, survivors, clinicians, and researchers to share knowledge and strategies, thereby improving global patient care.

Equity

Dr. Brenda Gallie's remarkable contributions extend beyond exemplary clinical care and research and address inequity issues within healthcare. A tireless advocate for global health equality, she has worked to bridge gaps in RB treatment and care across different geographies and socio-economic classes.

Her co-founding of World Eye Cancer Hope exemplifies this commitment. By fostering global collaboration, this group aims to ensure that every child, irrespective of their location or background, has access to the best possible care. This effort is particularly critical given that retinoblastoma outcomes often hinge on early diagnosis and treatment, aspects that can be significantly compromised in resource-limited settings.

Dr. Gallie's tireless efforts extend to her influential role in policy-making, advocating for genetic screening to ensure early detection of retinoblastoma, genetic counselling and support services, understanding that holistic care goes beyond medical treatments. Recognizing that financial constraints often deter families from seeking and continuing treatment, she has developed strategies that seek affordable care for all patients.

In the realm of research, Dr. Gallie has championed the patient voice in design and conduct of clinical trials to ensure findings are relevant and applicable to diverse populations.

Dr. Gallie's deep commitment to reducing disparities and her significant achievements in this regard underscore her worthiness for recognition.

Global recognition

1983: Honor Award - American Academy of Ophthalmology

1990: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada Gallie Lecturer

1991: MacDonald Prevention of Blindness Award

1998: Distinguished Scientist - Medical Research Council of Canada

1999: O Harold Warwick Prize - National Cancer Institute of Canada

2006: Member of the Order of Ontario

2008: The Ellsworth Lecture - International Society of Eye Genetics Disease and Retinoblastoma

2009: 3rd Martin J. Steinbach Lectureship - University of Toronto, Department of Ophthalmology and Vision Sciences

2009: Alcon Research Institute Award,

2010: Bowman Lecture and Medal - Royal College of Ophthalmologists, United Kingdom

2011: Champion of Genetics - Canadian Gene Cure Foundation

2011: Biomedical Science Ambassador Award - Banting Research Foundation and Partners in Research

2013: Life-time Achievement Award - Canadian Ophthalmological Society

2015: Member of the Order of Canada

2018: Helen Keller Prize for Vision Research - Helen Keller Foundation for Research and Education

2019: The First Murphree Lecture - International Society Ocular Oncology

2022: 35th Distinguished Visiting Professor Distinguished Visiting Professor, Children's National Hospital in Washington , D.C.

2023: 4th Annual Paul T. Finger Guest Lecturer, 58th C.S. O'Brien Professorship and Tulane Resident Research Day

2023: Keynote Speaker, First Meeting of the International Society of Ocular Oncology in Africa