

## Obituary – Dr John Mendelsohn, M.D., WIN Chairman Emeritus

Dr John Mendelsohn, M.D., President Emeritus of the University of Texas, MD Anderson Cancer Center, Chairman Emeritus of the WIN Consortium (WIN), a brilliant scientist and visionary, optimist and a truly inspirational leader died from glioblastoma on Jan. 7, 2019 at his home in Houston. He was 82.

Dr Mendelsohn was an internationally acclaimed leader in the field of medicine. He researched the monoclonal antibody against the EGF receptor cetuximab that later became the drug Erbitux and was used to treat thousands of head, neck, colorectal and lung cancer patients.

He was the founding director of the University of California San Diego cancer center followed by the chair of the Department of Medicine at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York. Most notably, he served as the 3<sup>rd</sup> President of MD Anderson from 1996 to 2011, transforming it into the pre-eminent cancer institution in the world. Later, he co-led the Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayad Al Nahyan Institute for Personalized Cancer Therapy (IPCT). Despite his impressive career, his innate curiosity to do more, that inspired the MD Anderson tagline “Making Cancer History”, he acknowledged with humility that a worldwide effort from all cancer stakeholders was necessary in order to develop cutting-edge concepts in precision cancer medicine, deliver them more rapidly to patients around the world and achieve a substantial improvement on patient survival for cancers with poor prognosis.

From this premise that a global effort was needed to improve patient access to precision medicine, Dr Mendelsohn became the visionary founding Chairman of the WIN Consortium, a not-for-profit translational research organization that promotes global collaborations around novel and ambitious scientific approaches and sharing information in order to bring the latest innovations in precision cancer medicine in treating diverse patient populations. WIN, presently, a consortium of 40 members from 21 countries across 4 continents with the participation and expertise from cancer centers, industries (pharma and technology companies), not-for-profits and payors.

Since its inception in 2010, WIN has worked to share information, promote investigation, and expand clinical adoption of personalized cancer therapy. The annual Symposium is the most visible part of the WIN Consortium’s activities, but perhaps the most exciting part of WIN is the engagement of all the different parties, from academic institutions to industry collaborators, and the unique opportunity this offers to truly collaborate in developing the next generation of clinical trials. Global personalized medicine clinical trials include, WINTHER and most recently, the landmark lung cancer, tri-therapy clinical trial, SPRING.

During the last 11 years of his life, Dr Mendelsohn dedicated an enormous amount of time to WIN, he was quoted as saying “I have been striving to bring targeted cancer into the clinic for more than 3 decades. WIN is carrying this goal forward, globally”.

WIN remains part of his international lifelong legacy and achievements to improve personalized cancer care to the patient and we honor his memory in helping to continue to build WIN to where it is today.

WIN is indebted to his knowledge, expertise, mentoring, time and friendship and we have been blessed to have him as our founding Chairman; he will be deeply missed.