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### **Ludwig Cancer Research gives \$90 million to MIT**

Cambridge, MASS. – MIT has received \$90 million from Ludwig Cancer Research, on behalf of its founder Daniel K. Ludwig, a gift that aims to transform basic research on metastasis, the process by which cancer cells spread from a primary tumor to distant sites in the body. The gift — one of the largest in the Institute’s history — adds considerable strength to MIT’s interdisciplinary approach to cancer research.

The Ludwig Center at MIT is one of six centers to receive a total of \$540 million in new financial support from Ludwig. The other Ludwig Centers are housed at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and the medical schools at Johns Hopkins University, Harvard University, Stanford University and the University of Chicago.

The gift adds to endowments created in 2006 to establish individual Ludwig Centers at each institution. The Ludwig Center for Molecular Oncology at MIT is housed within the David H. Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research and focuses on metastasis.

“This extraordinary gift comes at a remarkable time in the 40-year history of cancer research at MIT. The Koch Institute is pioneering a new approach that unites scientists and engineers in a multidisciplinary fight against cancer,” MIT President, L. Rafael Reif said. “Central to this effort is basic research to understand the causes and mechanisms of the disease. Ludwig’s generosity will support our efforts to answer two critical questions: how cancer spreads in the body and what we can do to stop it.”

Ed McDermott, Ludwig trustee and president and CEO of the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, highlights the importance of supporting top scientists with long-term, sustained funding to alter the course of cancer research.

“We have made tremendous progress in our understanding of what drives many cancers, unearthing new ways of thinking about preventing, treating and curing the disease. This Ludwig funding is designed to help drive breakthrough research forward, and more must be done. Increased resources are necessary to realize the next-generation diagnostics and therapies that cancer patients desperately need,” said McDermott.

**Cancer research at MIT**

MIT's commitment to cancer traces back to the establishment in 1974 of the pioneering Center for Cancer Research (CCR), founded by Nobel Prize winner Salvador E. Luria. Basic research in cancer biology at MIT has led to five Nobel Prizes and two of the first molecularly targeted anticancer drugs, Herceptin (1998) and Gleevec (2001). MIT has also been the source of key findings on the spread of tumors, from the role of specific proteins that operate in the spaces between cells to how cells outside the tumor help the process along.

"Metastasis is responsible for 90 percent of cancer-related deaths, yet we still understand little about how it begins. These funds should change that," said Robert Weinberg, director of the Ludwig Center for Molecular Oncology at MIT. Weinberg, the Daniel K. Ludwig Professor for Cancer Research at MIT, is also a founding member of the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research.

Today the Koch Institute, successor to the CCR, is the cornerstone of a major research initiative at MIT with a cross-disciplinary, collaborative approach that brings together top scientists and engineers to combat cancer. One of eight National Cancer Institute-designated basic research centers in the U.S., it is the only one to apply this multidisciplinary approach.

"We are extremely grateful to receive this gift in support of cancer research," said Tyler Jacks, a Daniel K. Ludwig Scholar at the Ludwig MIT Center and director of the Koch Institute, "and we are committed to use these funds to make a meaningful impact on the important problem of metastasis. These funds come at an especially critical time when federal funding for cancer and other forms of biomedical research are in jeopardy."

The late Daniel K. Ludwig, an American businessman, donated nearly all of his U.S. and international assets to create the six Ludwig Centers, as well as the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, known collectively as Ludwig Cancer Research. Since its inception, the organization has committed \$2.5 billion to cancer research.

At MIT, [Ludwig](#) funds currently support the [Ludwig Center](#) and six Koch Institute faculty, as well as training opportunities through fellowships to students and postdocs working in the field of metastasis.

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Ludwig Center for Molecular Oncology at MIT  
<http://www.ludwigcancerresearch.org/location/mit-center>

David H. Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research  
<http://ki.mit.edu/>



MIT Spectrum article on 2006 gift  
<http://spectrum.mit.edu/articles/on-a-new-track/>