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**IN MEMORY OF FAMED ATTORNEY JOHNNIE L. COCHRAN,
CENTER WILL STREAMLINE BRAIN TUMOR STUDIES**



LOS ANGELES (April 23, 2007) – Cedars-Sinai Medical Center will open its Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr. Brain Tumor Center on May 3, 2007 to shepherd basic research discoveries through patient trials and the government approval process.

New medications and therapies that reach the market to make a difference in patients' lives are many years in the making. Promising findings from laboratory research are supported by animal studies before entering several phases of clinical trials and eventually being placed on pharmacists' shelves or in doctors' offices or hospitals.

"The new Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr. Brain Tumor Center serves as a coordination point for the physicians who specialize in clinical trials, the data managers, and the clinical research nurses who interface with the Food and Drug Administration and institutional review boards to manage human studies," said Keith L. Black, M.D., neurosurgeon, research scientist and chairman of the Department of Neurosurgery at Cedars-Sinai.

"New discoveries and potential therapies will undergo the same extensive scrutiny as before, but the center and its dedicated personnel will allow us to streamline the process, efficiently advancing basic research findings into early human studies," said Black, who will serve as director.

Joining Cedars-Sinai nearly 10 years ago, Black brought together about 35 full-time researchers who study brain tumors from a variety of scientific angles and regularly publish articles in peer-reviewed journals. Their laboratory findings have led to several patient trials, including studies on an experimental brain tumor vaccine.

(more)

“The whole area of brain tumor research had been stagnant for about 40 years. In the 1960s, radiation therapy was found to be beneficial for brain tumors, but the median survival for the most common malignant brain tumor is still less than a year,” Black said. “One of the areas that we felt had a lot of promise was the concept of using the immune system to attack the tumor. We knew that brain tumors, in order to survive, had to evade being recognized by the immune system. So we put together a team of neurosurgeons, immunologists and molecular biologists to see if we could develop a vaccine” for the most aggressive form of brain tumor.

The vaccine, first used in patient treatment in 1998, has been found to significantly increase length of survival, and a number of studies are ongoing to devise ways to maximize its effectiveness.

“Our basic research scientists, patient care teams and human trials research specialists are committed to accelerating the search for new treatments that will alleviate the suffering that brain tumors cause. The Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr. Brain Tumor Center is a major step in that direction,” Black said.

With the personal and financial support of Dale Cochran, Johnnie’s widow, the research center is named after the famed attorney whose life was cut short by a brain tumor. He had received care at Cedars-Sinai but his life could not be saved, and his family hopes that new discoveries will lead to better treatments and even cures.

Cochran opened the law firm Cochran, Atkins & Evans in 1965 and became a highly recognized advocate within the African-American community. He often served on high-profile cases but said he especially cared about the clients who were unknown and needed a voice to speak on their behalf.

The May 3 opening – taking place during National Brain Tumor Week – will begin with a morning dedication ceremony and conclude with an evening invitation-only gala.

Participating in the day’s events will be members of the Brain Trust, a group of women from the entertainment industry and other fields who have raised millions of dollars to support the research efforts of the Maxine Dunitz Neurosurgical Institute, which Black founded when he came to Cedars-Sinai.

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The first in Southern California and one of only 10 hospitals in the state whose nurses have been honored with the prestigious Magnet designation, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center is one of the largest nonprofit academic medical centers in the Western United States. For 19 consecutive years, it has been named Los Angeles’ most preferred hospital for all health needs in an independent survey of area residents. Cedars-Sinai is internationally renowned for its diagnostic and treatment capabilities, as well as breakthroughs in biomedical research and superlative medical education. It ranks among the top 10 non-university hospitals in the nation for its research activities and is fully accredited by the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs, Inc. (AAHRPP). Additional information is available at www.cedars-sinai.edu.

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