



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MELANOMA RESEARCH ALLIANCE RAISES \$5 MILLION AT  
FIRST ANNUAL BENEFIT DINNER**

***One Hundred Percent Will Be Used to Fund Research***

WASHINGTON – Melanoma research got a boost of support last week as patient advocates, philanthropists and scientists convened for the first Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA) annual benefit dinner at Sotheby’s in New York City.

The event yielded \$5 million, all of which will go to fund novel, transformative research programs worldwide that will advance scientific understanding of melanoma needed to enable the development of better prevention, diagnosis and treatment approaches. The dinner caps a strong year to date in terms of revenue raised by MRA, with \$15 million raised since January. One hundred percent of donations to MRA are used to directly support melanoma research.

Now in its third year, MRA is the largest private funder of melanoma research in the United States and is dedicated to accelerating the finding of a cure for this often fatal disease. Melanoma of the skin is one of the most common cancers in the United States and is among the top 10 new cancer diagnoses.

The benefit dinner was a salute to the progress that is finally being made in the field of melanoma research, as well as the 87 principal investigators, including 10 Young Investigators, currently being funded by MRA. The dinner featured a live auction led by Jamie Niven, Sotheby’s chairman of North and South America, an exclusive preview of Impressionist and Modern Art, and the opportunity to meet with some of the most forward-thinking minds in cancer research. A highlight of the auction came when supporters pledged sponsorship for an additional nine Young Investigator awards.

“There is finally hope and progress in this field, so the timing is right to accelerate innovative research,” said Wendy K.D. Selig, president and CEO of MRA. “The event’s energy and enthusiasm will go a long way toward galvanizing the melanoma research community to pursue efforts that will allow us to make tangible progress in the fight against melanoma.”

Since its founding in 2007 MRA has awarded nearly \$22 million to 50 research programs in eight countries. Its research program is dedicated to finding and funding the most promising melanoma research worldwide. The 2011 grant cycle is now underway, and MRA is accepting proposals in response to a Request for Proposal issued in August 2010 (more information can be found at [http://www.melanomaresearchalliance.org/mra\\_research/rfp.html](http://www.melanomaresearchalliance.org/mra_research/rfp.html)).

“For too long work on melanoma treatment options have not kept pace with scientific breakthroughs that are defining 21<sup>st</sup> Century medicine,” said Debra Black, MRA chair and a melanoma survivor. “With the research community’s incredible energy, ideas and focus, and the enthusiasm from our broad base of supporters, we are confident that we will continue to make significant progress in our search for cures for melanoma.”

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### **About the Melanoma Research Alliance**

The Melanoma Research Alliance is a public charity formed in 2007 under the auspices of the Milken Institute, with the initial generous founding support of Debra and Leon Black. It supports an international, cross-disciplinary group of biomedical researchers possessing clinical and scientific expertise to explore, identify and pursue innovative solutions to critical research issues leading to better treatments and a cure for patients with melanoma. For more information, visit [www.melanomaresearchalliance.org](http://www.melanomaresearchalliance.org).

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