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Luau and Longboard Invitational Celebrates 20th Anniversary of ‘Surfing for a Cure’ Aug. 18

Surf-themed fundraiser has raised nearly \$6 million to fund cancer research at UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center



Surfers show off their boards at the Luau and Longboard

A surfer and San Diego resident at the time, Kary Mullis won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1993 for his invention of the polymerase chain reaction, considered one of the monumental scientific techniques of the 20th century. That year, Mullis also became the founding honorary chair of the Luau and Longboard Invitational, a fundraising event for the UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center that unites two passions common in San Diego: surfing and science. Two decades later, Mullis returns to the event as the 2013 recipient of the Rell Sunn Award, which will be presented at the 20th Annual Luau and Longboard Invitational on Sunday, Aug. 18.

“The Luau and Longboard Invitational is a tradition truly unique to San Diego,” said UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. “It combines two of our region’s greatest strengths—our location and life sciences industry—to advance cancer research for the well-being of our community and society at large.”

Now in its 20th year, the annual event has raised nearly \$6 million to advance research at UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center, which is the only one of its kind in San Diego and Imperial counties to hold a National Cancer Center Institute designation as a Comprehensive Cancer Center, and one of just 41 such centers in the United States. Most recently, UC San Diego Health System was ranked among the nation’s best in U.S. News and World Report’s 2013-2014 “America’s Best Hospitals” issue, taking the number one spot in the San Diego metropolitan area as well as national rankings in 10 specialties—including cancer.

“The support shown by the local community and businesses each year at the Luau and Longboard Invitational is truly incredible,” said Moores Cancer Center director Scott Lippman, M.D. “Their generous donations help us to achieve our mission of translating promising scientific discoveries into new and better options for the care of our patients.”

The fundraiser opens with a surfing competition followed by a luau celebration, which includes the presentation of the Rell Sunn “Queen of Makaha” Award. The award was established in memory of Rell Sunn, a Hawaiian surfer and longtime Luau and Longboard Invitational supporter who lost her battle with breast cancer. Each year, the event volunteer committee selects an honoree who has displayed a strong will, unselfishness and compassion in the battle against cancer. Past recipients have included Nobel Laureate and UC San Diego professor Roger Tsien; National Medal of Science recipient and UC San Diego alumnus J. Craig Venter; and former director of Moores Cancer Center Dennis Carson, who discovered and developed a drug—now marketed as Leustatin—that effectively treats hairy cell leukemia, once considered deadly.

“We are very excited to present Kary Mullis with the Rell Sunn Award on the 20th anniversary of the Luau,” said Sam Armstrong, who is co-chairing the event this year along with John Otterson. “Kary and Rell surfed on a team together at the first Luau and Longboard Invitational. Like several of our awardees, Kary represents the cornerstone of the biotech industry, and his work has had a profound impact for cancer research.”

Armstrong and Otterson also served as co-chairs of the first Luau and Longboard Invitational in 1993. Their goal was to create an event that would bring the surfing community together to connect, compete and above all, raise funds for cancer research. They recruited surf legends—individuals who helped to build the sport in the 1960s and 1970s—along with community members and local businesses with a passion for surfing and science.

“It’s been exciting to see the notable people who surf who have gotten involved with the Luau over the years,” said Otterson. “We have San Diego-based companies doing incredible things in the life sciences and technology fields who come out to support the Luau.”

This year’s participating surf legends include **Robert August**, star of the 1966 surf documentary “The Endless Summer;” **Fernando Aguerre**, founder of Reef and president of the International Surfing Association; **Jericho Poppler**, cancer survivor and pioneer of women’s professional surfing; **Rusty Preisendorfer**, UC San Diego alumnus, San Diego native and founder of Rusty Surfboards; and **Kathy “Gidget” Zuckerman**, the inspiration for the fictional character of the 1957 novel, “Gidget: The Little Girl with Big Ideas,” which was based on her experiences growing up and surfing in Malibu.

The 2013 Luau and Longboard Invitational kicks off at 7 a.m. at the beach near Scripps Pier in La Jolla, where teams of four will be paired with a surf legend for a friendly competition. The luau follows at noon with live music, traditional Polynesian dancers, a tropical buffet, and live and silent auctions with



The Thrivers Team recognizes surfers who have successfully overcome cancer.

one-of-a-kind surf memorabilia and experiences.

For the sixth year in a row, Pfizer, Inc. is the title sponsor of the fundraiser. The company will support its own team of surfing scientists at the event as well as the Thrivers Team, which is made up of surfers who have successfully fought cancer.

The surfing competition is free for viewing; a ticket to the luau fundraiser is \$150. For more information about sponsorship opportunities, team entries, tickets and event activities, call (858) 246-1230, or visit the event website at www.longboardluau.org. More information on UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center can be found at www.cancer.ucsd.edu.

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