Carlo Croce, MD, 2007 Henry M. Stratton Medal Winner

Today at 9:30 a.m., the Henry M. Stratton Medal will be presented to Carlo Croce, MD, honoring a career devoted to investigating and revealing the genetic origins of cancer.

The Henry M. Stratton Medal is intended to honor an individual whose contributions to hematology are well recognized and have taken place over a period of several years. Dr. Croce easily exceeds both of these requirements. Since the beginning of his career in 1970, he has researched incessantly. His bibliography lists nearly 700 papers. Searching for his name on the ASH Hematology Library calls up more than 1,200 results, some for papers he has authored, others in which he is cited, and still others in which he is gratefully acknowledged.

While the quantity of his work is impressive, the quality truly stands out. Focusing his studies on the earliest genetic stages of hematopoietic malignancies and cancer, Dr. Croce has made many significant discoveries. He revealed the juxtaposition of human immunoglobulin genes and the *MYC* oncogene, discovered the deregulation of *MYC* in Burkitt lymphoma, and cloned and characterized the *bcl-2* gene involved in follicular lymphoma. Through his research, several genes have been identified that play an important role in the beginnings of several human neoplastic diseases. These include *ALL1*, involved in human acute leukemia; *Tcl-1*, involved in chronic T-cell leukemia and adult T-cell leukemia; *LZTSI*, related to breast, prostate, and ovarian cancers; and *FHIT*, which plays a role in the pathogenesis of lung, nasopharyngeal, esophageal, gastrointestinal, breast, head and neck, and cervical cancers. Additionally, he has reported the self-fusion mechanism of the *ALL1* gene and located several genes targeted by *ALL1*. He has also studied the role of *Tal-1/SCL/Tcl-5* in the pathogenesis of human leukemias and in hematopoietic differentiation, and has also developed a *Tal-1* transgenic mouse model.

Chair of the ASH Awards Committee, Sharon Murphy, MD, characterizes his work as "seminal contributions to the understanding of the molecular genetics of lymphomas and leukemias."

Dr. Croce's work on the role of the *MYC* oncogene in Burkitt lymphoma, first published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* in 1982, provided some of the first evidence for the genetic basis of cancer. This discovery, along with subsequent research, has earned him a reputation as a cancer-gene hunter, even "the most successful gene hunter when it comes to malignant transformation," as he was described by OSU colleague Michael Caligiuri, MD, *("Carlo Croce in Columbus." Frontiers Magazine, 2005)*.

He has earned many such accolades, and the Stratton Medal joins an impressive list of awards. Dr. Croce is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and has received the Mott Prize from the General Motors Cancer Research Foundation, the Pezcoller International Award for Cancer Research, and the Clowes Award from AACR, among other honors. He has also been awarded the Gold Medal for Public Health by Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, then-president of Dr. Croce's native Italy.

Born in Milan, Dr. Croce studied medicine at the University of Rome, where he graduated summa cum laude in 1969. He then relocated to Philadelphia, where he would spend the next few decades working at institutions such as The Wistar Institute of Anatomy and Biology, the University of Pennsylvania, the Kimmel Cancer Institute, and Temple University. In 2004, he moved to his current location, The Ohio State University, where he serves as The John Wolfe Professor for Cancer Research; Professor and Chairman in the Department of Molecular Virology, Immunology, and Medical Genetics; Director of the Institute of Genetics; and Director of the Human Cancer Genetics Program.

From Milan to Ohio, his prolific career has taken Dr. Croce around the world. He has presented honorary lectures in Wurzburg, Germany, and Tel Aviv, Israel. He has received the Raymond Bourgine Award and Gold Medal of Paris, received an honorary degree from Uppsala University in Sweden, and been named an honorary member of the Japanese Cancer Association.