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PHILADELPHIA – (March 22, 2012) – The Wistar Institute has named ABC News correspondent and melanoma survivor Sam Donaldson as an honorary member of its Melanoma Research Center Advisory Board.

“I’m glad to enter into this partnership with Wistar,” said Donaldson. “No one person can fight melanoma alone, and it’s vital that we continue to invest in melanoma research to unlock better therapies and ultimately find a cure.”

As an honorary member of the Advisory Board, Donaldson joins a team of melanoma research advocates in furthering the mission of The Wistar Institute Melanoma Research Center (MRC) to create new and more effective treatments against the disease. Already the home to one of the largest and most prestigious melanoma laboratories in the nation, Wistar formed the MRC in 2010 to transform scientific discoveries into clinical advances by broadening the reach of the Institute’s connections to scientists, physicians, the life science industry and melanoma advocates.

Current advisory board members include: Maury Alsher, senior vice president of HUB International PA, LLC; Lee Ducat, president and founder of the National Disease Interchange; Joe Fazio, founder of The Susan Fazio Foundation for Melanoma Research; Joseph A. Goldblum, president of G-II Equity Investments; Marcy Gringlas, Ph.D.; Kate O’Neill, president of the Noreen O’Neill Foundation for Melanoma Research; Michael Widlitz, M.D., and Bryan Weingarten CEO of WP Realty.

“We are extremely pleased to have Donaldson on board in an advisory role,” said Meenhard Herlyn, D.V.M., D.Sc., Wistar professor and director of the MRC. “He has always been a great advocate for improvements in cancer education and greater increases in melanoma research funding.”

Under Herlyn’s leadership, Wistar has established a track record of melanoma research advances that spans more than 25 years. Recent discoveries by Herlyn and his colleagues have changed the science of melanoma, from basic genetics to new concepts that describe the stem cell-like abilities of melanoma cells to evade treatment. The Herlyn laboratory also pioneered the use of three-dimensional “artificial skin” cell cultures that serve as a model for studying how living tumors behave, as well as a proving ground for new therapeutics.

Donaldson, a 45-year veteran of the ABC News Network, has also served two appointments as ABC’s chief White House correspondent, covering the Carter, Reagan and Clinton administrations. Donaldson co-anchored This Week with Cokie Roberts from 1996 to 2002 and Prime Time Live with colleague Diane Sawyer until the show merged with 20/20 in 1999. Donaldson went on to host The Sam Donaldson Show --
Live In America as well as Politics Live. Today, Donaldson occasionally appears as a panelist on ABC's This Week and participates in a weekly roundup of ABC News Radio affiliate shows. He also sits on the board of the advocacy group Research!America, an organization promoting research into cancer treatment and prevention.

Donaldson received The Wistar Institute President’s Award in 2004 in recognition of his work championing the advancement of cancer research and treatments.

More information about The Wistar Institute’s Melanoma Research Center may be found here.

The Wistar Institute is an international leader in biomedical research with special expertise in cancer research and vaccine development. Founded in 1892 as the first independent nonprofit biomedical research institute in the country, Wistar has long held the prestigious Cancer Center designation from the National Cancer Institute. The Institute works actively to ensure that research advances move from the laboratory to the clinic as quickly as possible. The Wistar Institute: Today’s Discoveries – Tomorrow’s Cures. On the Web at www.wistar.org.

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