Lurie Challenge Creates Opportunity to Support Bay Area Cancer Researchers

The Challenge Fund will match new gifts and pledges of $5,000 or more, allowing donors to double their support for Damon Runyon scientists.

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To mark Damon Runyon's upcoming 75th anniversary in 2021, Connie and Bob Lurie have established a $1 million "Connie and Robert Lurie Breakthrough Challenge Fund" to generate new support for Damon Runyon scientists working at Stanford, UCSF, UC Berkeley, the Gladstone Institute and UC Santa Cruz.

Connie and Bob, and the entire Lurie family, are a Bay Area institution. Many know them as leaders in the world of commercial real estate, for their generous philanthropy, or for saving the Giants from moving to Toronto by purchasing the team in 1976. What you might not know is how committed they are to finding cures for cancer and supporting new generations of breakthrough scientists in the Bay Area. They are now partnering with Damon Runyon to build support for our many Bay Area researchers.

The Lurie family's relationship with Damon Runyon dates back to its very founding. Louis "Lou" Lurie, a legendary local real estate developer, was a good friend of Damon Runyon founder and renowned journalist Walter Winchell. Lou joined the Damon Runyon Board of Directors in the early 1950s and served as its West Coast champion, contributing over $1 million to Damon Runyon during his lifetime.

The baton then passed to his son Robert "Bob" Lurie and his wife, Connie, who is a director emeritus of the Damon Runyon Board and a founding member of Damon Runyon's Bay Area Committee. Connie and Bob have been extremely generous to Damon Runyon, supporting our Clinical Investigator Award Continuation Grant program and 13 Damon Runyon scientists through the Lurie Scholars. They have also been phenomenal advocates for the Foundation. As Lorraine Egan, President and CEO of Damon Runyon says, "The Luries' endorsement of Damon Runyon over the years is a badge of honor. They are uniquely wise, strategic and passionate about the causes they support."

Damon Runyon Board member and Bay Area Committee Chair Andy Rachleff says the Luries' "dedication to Damon Runyon's mission and to our growing cadre of scientists affiliated with Bay Area institutions is inspiring to all of us."

New gifts and pledges of $5,000 or more (up to $100,000 per year) will be matched by the Lurie Breakthrough Challenge Fund, allowing donors to double their support for Damon Runyon's innovative scientists. Donors can even name individual Damon Runyon scientists by funding at least half the cost of an award.

"Bob and I are delighted to continue the family tradition of supporting Damon Runyon and are thrilled to be a part of its Bay Area Committee," Connie Lurie said. "We hope the Challenge Fund will encourage new support by people who don't know about the work of the Foundation and inspire them to get involved. Our goal is to put Damon Runyon on the map as a critically important supporter of the best young scientists in the Bay Area."

The Lurie Challenge will run from fall 2018 through spring 2022 or until all challenge funds have been used. For more information, please contact Amy Franklin-Willis, Senior Director of Individual Philanthropy & Bay Area Relations, at amy.franklin-willis@damonrunyon.org or 510.460.9859.

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