

MRA's Latest Research Report: Reaching for the Stars

Jamie Goldfarb and Ken Billett, both melanoma survivors, share how their lives have been shaped by recent advances in melanoma research.

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Each year, MRA convenes global thought leaders from across the melanoma research community to exchange ideas, report on scientific successes and challenges, and network and forge new collaborations.

To start the Retreat, Jamie Goldfarb and Ken Billett, both melanoma survivors, shared how their lives have been shaped by recent advances in melanoma research.

Jamie was diagnosed with Stage 4 melanoma after the birth of her son in 2009. Her doctor told her that he'd do everything he could to give her six months with her newborn. Instead, Jamie chose to enroll in a clinical trial offered at the National Cancer Institute.

"Because of that clinical trial, I have been completely disease free for the last ten years," she told attendees. "Research is literally the difference between life and death for patients."

"I'm here today because of you and the scientists and researchers who came before you," said Ken Billett. His journey with melanoma began in the 1990s and since then, he has had 10 distinct melanomas removed. In 2013, melanoma was found in both of his lungs. Ken began treatment with targeted therapies that exploited the c-Kit mutation found in his tumors. This controlled his melanoma for the next six years. In 2020, Ken began immunotherapy to treat the growing melanoma metastases throughout his body. By February 2023, Ken's melanoma is stable.

"I'm fortunate," says Ken. "That's why it's important to speak up about my experiences. I'm here for a reason."

Featured topics in the 2023 Research Report:

- Novel Targets for Potential New Treatments and Combating Resistance
- Discovery Research Expands the Possibilities
- New Insights Into Rare Melanomas

- Artificial Intelligence and Imaging in Melanoma Care
- Combating Melanoma Brain Metastases and Leptomeningeal Disease
- Bridging the Gaps From the Lab to the Clinic
- Immunotherapy Options Continue to Grow for Melanoma
- Living Well Despite Melanoma
- Improving Communication With Your Melanoma Care Team

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