

MASONIC CANCER ALLIANCE ANNUAL MEETING

Friday, April 12, 2024



PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

GARY C. DOOLITTLE, MD

Dr. Gary Doolittle is the Capitol Federal Masonic Professor of Medicine in the Division of Medical Oncology at the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC), the Medical Director of the Masonic Cancer Alliance (MCA), and Vice-Chair of Education in the Department of Internal Medicine at the KU School of Medicine. Dr. Doolittle has been a faculty member in the KUMC Division of Medical Oncology for more than 30 years, specializing in the treatment of malignant melanoma. As MCA Medical Director, he has led the effort to advance the quality and reach of cancer prevention, early detection, and survivorship throughout the region.

Dr. Doolittle has written many publications on a variety of oncology topics, with a major emphasis on using technology to enhance the care of rural cancer patients. He currently serves as the contact Primary Investigator for the KU Cancer Center/MCA

Minority/Underserved National Cancer Institute Community Oncology Research Program, a grant designed to extend cancer clinical trials to the rural sector in the state of Kansas and western Missouri. Most recently, he and others launched a Tumor Infiltrating Lymphocyte (TIL) service for the treatment of malignant melanoma at KU Cancer Center, one of only 27 sites authorized in the country to provide this treatment.

Dr. Doolittle earned his medical degree from KUMC, where he also completed a residency in internal medicine and a fellowship in hematology/oncology.

MICHAEL R. GIESKE, MD

Dr. Michael Gieske grew up down the street from St. Elizabeth Hospital in Edgewood, Kentucky, now the site of the region's largest cancer center. He graduated from University of Louisville Medical College in 1984, completing his Family Practice Residency at St. Elizabeth Healthcare in 1987. Dr. Gieske left his Family Medicine career of 36 years in 2022 to commit all his energies to administrative work related to lung cancer awareness and screening, related policy, advocacy, and research.

As Director of Lung Cancer Screening and Physician Advisor Advocacy, he has worked with his team at St. Elizabeth Healthcare to build one of the most successful lung cancer screening programs in the country. He is a fierce advocate for all those at risk for and with lung cancer, helping to change the narrative and instill hope.



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PAUL J. HESKETH, MD, FASCO

Dr. Paul Hesketh is Director of the Lahey Cancer Institute, Director of the Sophia Gordon Cancer Center and Director of Thoracic Oncology at Lahey Hospital & Medical Center in Burlington, Massachusetts. He is also Professor of Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine. Dr. Hesketh has a broad interest in investigational antineoplastic therapeutics, with a particular focus in defining effective new treatment approaches for lung cancer and the supportive management of the patient with cancer. He serves as a member of the Executive Leadership Group of the Lung Committee of the Southwest Oncology Group (SWOG), a National Cancer Institute sponsored nationwide clinical trials group. He also chairs the SWOG Lung Community Engagement Sub-Committee and SWOG Professional Review Committee and is the Principal Investigator for SWOG at Lahey Hospital Medical Center.

Dr. Hesketh is a past President of the Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer (MASCC). He is a member of the antiemetic guideline committees for the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) (co-chair) and MASCC. He is also a member of the ASCO Stage IV Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer Guideline Committees and ASCO Thoracic Advisory Group. He also serves on the Board of Visitors for the College of Health Professions, Sacred Heart University. He has received multiple academic and teaching awards, including the Alumni Achievement Award in Science (Boston College), Best of Boston – Medical Oncology (Boston Magazine), Champion of Healthcare (Boston Business Journal), Distinguished Service Award (Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer), Massachusetts Oncologist of the Year (Massachusetts Society of Clinical Oncology), Fellow, American Society of Clinical Oncology. He serves as a reviewer and editorial board member for a number of scientific journals and is a former Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Oncology: Index & Reviews*. He is an author of more than 250 scientific manuscripts, abstracts, and book chapters.

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ROY A. JENSEN, MD

Dr. Roy Jensen was appointed director of The University of Kansas Cancer Center in 2004. With his guidance and a broad-based university, community, and regional effort, KU Cancer Center achieved National Cancer Institute (NCI) comprehensive designation, the NCI's most elite level, in July 2022. The cancer center is one of 57 NCI-designated comprehensive cancer centers across the country. Dr. Jensen is currently Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Professor of Anatomy and Cell Biology, Professor of Cancer Biology, and the William R. Jewell, M.D. Distinguished Kansas Masonic Professor, at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Prior to his appointment at Kansas, Jensen was a member of the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center and a faculty member in Pathology, Cell Biology, and Cancer Biology.

Dr. Jensen graduated from Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and remained there for an Anatomic Pathology residency and a Surgical Pathology fellowship with Dr. David Page. Following his clinical training he accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at the NCI in the laboratory of Dr. Stuart Aaronson. After joining the faculty at Vanderbilt, Dr. Jensen's research interests focused on understanding the function of BRCA1 and BRCA2 and their role in breast neoplasia; and in the characterization of premalignant breast disease at both the morphologic and molecular levels. He has more than 150 scientific publications and has lectured widely on the clinical and molecular aspects of breast cancer pathology.

Dr. Jensen has served on numerous grant review panels, study sections, and site visit teams for the NIH, the Department of Defense-Breast Cancer Research Program, the Medical Research Council of Canada, the California Breast Cancer Research Program, the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology. He serves on the Science Policy and Governmental Affairs Committees for the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) and is a member of the AACR Pathology Task Force, AACR Publications Committee and the AACR Nominating Committee. He served as a member of the Science Policy Working Group of the American Society for Investigative Pathology and co-chaired the research committee for C-Change. In 2013, he was elected to the Board of Directors for the Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) and served as the president of AACI from 2018-2020. Dr. Jensen was chair of NCI's Subcommittee A from 2018-2020 and also served on the Director's Working Group for the Board of Scientific Advisors to the National Cancer Institute. He is also the Chair of the University of Oklahoma Stephenson Cancer Center External Advisory Board.



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ANUP K. KASI, MD, MPH

Dr. Anup Kasi is an Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC). He has been designated as an oncology pioneer in clinical research and expertise in pancreatic cancer at KU Cancer Center. Dr. Kasi received his medical degree from Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute in India. He received his Master of Public Health degree at the University of Texas School of Public Health and completed his thesis project at MD Anderson Cancer Center. He then proceeded to complete an Internal Medicine residency and a Hematology-Oncology and GI Medical Oncology fellowship at KUMC.

His clinical interests include Gastrointestinal Cancers, Pancreatic Carcinoma, Colorectal Carcinoma, Gastric Carcinoma, Liver Carcinoma, Anal Cancer, Esophageal Cancers, Neuroendocrine tumor. He actively participates in the GI tumor board.

MELINDA LAIR

Raised in Frontenac, Kansas, Ms. Lair graduated from Pittsburg State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication. She joined the KU Area Health Education Center (AHEC) in 2007 as a senior coordinator focused on continuing medical education. In 2017, she and her husband moved to Shawnee, Kansas while she continued working for the AHEC, and in the fall of 2018 she transferred to the KU Continuing Education office where she worked until 2022. Currently, Ms. Lair is a program manager for the KU Tobacco Treatment Education program in the Department of Population Health.

MELANIE LEEPERS, RN, MBA

Ms. Leepers has been the Cancer Program Manager and Clinical Trial Nurse at Tammy Walker Cancer Center at Salina Regional Health Center in Salina, Kansas since 2012. She has spent the majority of her nursing career as a bedside nurse in ICU and Med/Surg; she has also worked as a home health and hospice nurse. Ms. Leepers received a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Sterling College in 1985. In 1987, she started the Associate Degree in Nursing program at Hutchinson Community College and finished in 1989. In 2008, she earned her Master of Business Administration degree from Friends University. Ms. Leepers presented with Dr. Jennifer Klemp at the Academy of Oncology Nurse & Patient Navigators conference on genetic testing of ovarian cancer patients. Fun fact about Ms. Leepers: she began a side-hustle career as a 'cookier' one year ago.



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MANIDHAR R. LEKKALA, MD

Dr. Manidhar Lekkala is an oncology and hematology specialist at The University of Kansas Cancer Center in partnership with The University of Kansas Health System St. Francis Campus in Topeka, Kansas. He attended medical school at Mahadevappa Rampure Medical College and Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences in India before completing an internal medicine residency as Chief Resident at Guthrie Robert Packer Hospital in Pennsylvania. He also completed a fellowship in hematology and oncology at the University of Rochester Medical Center/Strong Memorial Hospital in New York.

Dr. Lekkala treats patients with various types of cancers as well as those with blood-related disorders, clotting problems, and bleeding problems. Dr. Lekkala takes specific interest in treating patients with breast and lung cancer. He puts great focus on improving the quality of care and outcomes in cancer patients.

HAORAN LI, MD, PHD

Dr. Haoran Li is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine with a subcertification in medical oncology. He completed a fellowship at The University of Utah. He earned his medical degree from Sun Yat-Sen University and completed his residency at Lincoln Medical Center.



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JENNIFER MCALLASTER, MD, FACS, FASMBS, D-ABOM

Dr. Jennifer McAllaster is the MCA's associate medical director/surgeon liaison. In this role, she serves as the surgeon contact and liaison between the MCA and surgeons throughout Kansas. She also serves as the Kansas State Chair for the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer (CoC). She hopes to strengthen current MCA member site community involvement with the MCA, foster new relationships throughout the state to enhance MCA involvement, expand CoC membership, and create a more robust system statewide of surgical cancer collaboration and networking.

A faculty member of The University of Kansas Health System Department of Surgery and a community surgeon, Dr. McAllaster has an extensive record of service around cancer. She has served as the CoC Cancer Liaison Physician (CLP) for The University of Kansas Health System St. Francis Campus for 12 years and earned the Outstanding CLP Award in 2022. She has served as the CoC state chair for six years, earning the Outstanding State Chair Award in 2022 as well. Dr. McAllaster is a KU Medical Center-trained physician who has established many ties throughout Kansas and who works collaboratively with key leaders in cancer care across the state as well. As a lifelong Kansan, she is focused on continued efforts to enhance surgical care and resources for surgeons and their patients throughout the state.

DINESH PAL MUDARANTHAKAM, PHD, MBA

Dr. Mudaranthakam is an Assistant Professor of Biostatistics & Data Science at KU Medical Center (KUMC) and KUMC's Director of Research Information Technology, Biostatistics & Data Science. His area of research is in public health policy and management. His work primarily focuses on developing novel technological interventions that aid cancer patients in minimizing financial toxicity and educating minority populations about treatment details and available resources. Dr. Mudaranthakam previously worked for Cerner (pharmacy team); his duties included developing pharmacy solutions for patient drug dosage, physician electronic drug prescriptions, and databases related to pharmacy solutions. He has developed significant knowledge of data structures associated with health record demographics, patient diagnoses, labs, and patient treatments. Dr. Mudaranthakam is highly involved with most of the data warehouse development for cancer and non-cancer research at KUMC. Additionally, he oversees data management across clinical trials that span different study phases at KUMC. Dr. Mudaranthakam has been instrumental in building informatics teams that manage the research ecosystem at KUMC.



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PIERRE ONDA, MD, MPH

Dr. Pierre Onda is a retired primary care physician with an interest in preventive health. After his wife Heidi was diagnosed with advanced stage lung cancer in 2018, they co-founded The White Ribbon Project along with several other lung cancer advocates to promote lung cancer awareness to change the public perception of the disease. The White Ribbon Project also advocates for other actions to help improve outcomes for people affected by lung cancer including lung cancer prevention, early detection, and research for improved treatments.

DAVID SEYMOUR

Mr. Seymour is the Senior Public Affairs Specialist for the Social Security Administration (SSA) in the Kansas City region. He began his federal service as a Congressional Aide, then joined SSA as a Claims Representative. After serving as an Operations Supervisor and a Public Affairs Specialist, he relocated to Kansas City to serve as a Technical Training Instructor for new SSA employees nationwide. His current duties in the Regional Public Affairs Office include serving as a liaison for congressional offices, assisting with media inquiries, and promoting public awareness and understanding of the programs Social Security administers.

ELIZA STERNLICHT

Ms. Sternlicht is the co-founder and COO of MediCircle, a startup that connects unused cancer medications to patients in need. She is a biomedical engineer and an innovator in the healthcare space, with a focus on increasing healthcare accessibility. Ms. Sternlicht has created award-winning low-cost video laryngoscopes, 3D-printed prosthetics, dual-chamber syringes to deliver anesthetics and vaccines, novel gynecological devices and training models, and an ambulatory EEG for epilepsy diagnosis and treatment. She is also a member of the Development Committee for the Legorreta Cancer Center. She received her Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering from Brown University.

JENI WAKEFIELD

A KU School of Nursing graduate, Ms. Wakefield has worked for Olathe Health for 35 years. She developed a love for oncology while taking care of patients on the oncology unit. In 2013, she left nursing management to help develop the oncology service line for Olathe Health. She currently works as an oncology nurse navigator, working specifically with lung cancer patients. She also coordinates the lung cancer screening program for Olathe Health and Miami County Medical Center.

