

DR. AND MRS. JIM WITLIFF

THE LECTURE SERIES RECOGNIZES CONTRIBUTIONS OF DR. JAMES L. (JIM) WITLIFF, DISTINGUISHED CANCER RESEARCHER, SCHOLAR AND INVENTOR, WHO IS A 1956 GRADUATE OF SAN MARCOS ACADEMY. AFTER GRADUATE STUDIES AT LSU SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN, AND THE OAK RIDGE NATIONAL LABORATORY ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION, HE JOINED THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER IN NEW YORK. THERE DR. WITLIFF WAS AMONG THE FIRST INVESTIGATORS TO DISCOVER THAT RECEPTOR PROTEINS FOR FEMALE SEX HORMONES, ESTROGEN, AND PROGESTERONE, IN A BREAST CANCER TISSUE BIOPSY SERVE AS BIOMARKERS PREDICTING A PATIENT'S RISK OF RECURRENCE AND RESPONSE TO HORMONE THERAPY. WITLIFF, WORKING WITH SCIENTISTS AT NEN/DUPONT, CO-DEVELOPED THE FIRST TISSUE-BASED DIAGNOSTICS TESTS FOR BREAST CANCER MANAGEMENT TO RECEIVE FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION APPROVAL. HIS LABORATORY WAS DESIGNATED THE NATIONAL REFERENCE FACILITY BY THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE FOR STANDARDIZATION OF THESE ASSAYS AND TRAINING STAFF IN LABORATORIES WORLDWIDE CONDUCTING CLINICAL TRIALS. HIS WIFE AND LABORATORY PARTNER, MITZIE WITLIFF, MANAGED DISTRIBUTION OF BIOMARKER REFERENCE SAMPLES THAT HE DEVELOPED TO MORE THAN 400 LABORATORIES WORLD-WIDE AS PART OF A FEDERALLY SUPPORTED PROGRAM. ONE OF THESE HISTORIC CLINICAL TRIALS WITH THE NATIONAL SURGICAL ADJUVANT BREAST & BOWEL PROJECT ESTABLISHED TAMOXIFEN AS A WIDELY USED ADJUVANT THERAPY FOR BREAST CANCER. DR. WITLIFF AND IA, INC. PATENTED RECEPTOR-BASED FIBER-OPTIC BIOSENSORS THAT DETECTED ENDOCRINE DISRUPTING COMPOUNDS IN THE ENVIRONMENT. HIS RESEARCH ON THE GENOMICS OF HUMAN BREAST CANCER USING LASER CAPTURE MICRO-DISSECTION LED TO DEVELOPMENT OF A TUMOR MARKER DATABASE AND TISSUE BIOREPOSITORY FOR DECIPHERING CLINICALLY RELEVANT TESTS. DR. WITLIFF SERVED ON A PRESTIGIOUS PANEL OF THE COLLEGE OF AMERICAN PATHOLOGISTS AND THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR CLINICAL ONCOLOGY THAT ESTABLISHED RIGID GUIDELINES FOR BIOMARKER TESTING IN BREAST CANCER. HIS AWARDS INCLUDE DOCTOR OF MEDICINE HONORIS CAUSA FROM LEOPOLD-FRANZENS-UNIVERSITÄT INNSBRUCK, AUSTRIA, UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR CAREER ACHIEVEMENTS, THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR CLINICAL CHEMISTRY'S AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO CLINICAL CHEMISTRY RESEARCH AND THE MORTON K. SCHWARTZ AWARD FOR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS IN CANCER RESEARCH DIAGNOSTICS AS WELL AS THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY'S GOLDSMITH RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AWARD. JIM AND MITZIE HAVE ESTABLISHED A FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM FOR SCHOLARS IN STEM STUDIES AT SMA.