University of Colorado Denver
Anschutz Medical Campus

The Charles C. Gates Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Biology Program

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http://www.uchsc.edu/news/newsrelease/2006/aug/23-stemcell.htm

The Charles C. Gates Distinguished Guest Lecture

Michele De Luca, MD

"Adult Epithelial Stem Cells and Regenerative Medicine"

November 12, 2007

RC-1 North, Room 1006,
Hensel Phelps Auditorium

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Charles C. Gates, Jr.

Years ago, Charles Gates began talking with his children – Diane Gates Wallach, of Denver, and John Gates, of Aspen, about the benefits stem cell research promised for so many people despite the risks and uncertainties of frontier medicine.

So 'it was natural' for his children to donate $6 million to the University of Colorado School of Medicine in memory of the Denver businessman. The gift, the largest of its kind to the school, established the Charles C. Gates Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Biology Program, which will focus on research that could cure debilitating diseases.

A generous philanthropist, Mr. Gates believed in transformational giving as an investment in a community and a cause. He liked to make gifts big enough to fundamentally change an organization, but gifts that wouldn't create new burdens for those organizations. All across Denver, his family's gifts – often capital gifts – attest to that philosophy.

"My dad was the sort of man who took risks when he felt they might reap great rewards," says his daughter, Diane. She tells one of her father's favorite stories to illustrate this philosophy.

> *When wagon trains headed West and came to a challenging creek, a "real man" tossed his hat to the other side. Since no real man would leave his hat behind, tossing it across committed him to ford the creek to retrieve it and carry on. Wallach says that to her father, tossing the hat symbolized a commitment to take the risks necessary to keep moving toward a goal.*

Charles C. Gates, former chairman of the board and CEO of the Gates Corporation and Gates Rubber Company, died on August 28, 2005, at his home in Denver. He was 84.

Mr. Gates was appointed vice president of the Gates Rubber Company in 1951. He became president and chairman of the board in 1961, upon the death of his father, and subsequently led the company to international prominence by the time it was sold to Tomkins plc in 1996. Many credit Mr. Gates' engineering innovations and forward thinking business tactics with transforming the company from a regional manufacturing company into one of the largest automotive and industrial hose and belt manufacturing firms in the world.

Michele De Luca, MD

Director,
Center for Regenerative Medicine

University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

Modena, Italy

Michele De Luca was born in Savona, Italy, May, 17, 1956. He received his M.D. degree from Catania University Medical School in 1980, followed by a Specialty in Endocrinology from the Medical School of the University La Sapienza in Rome, in 1984. Part of his speciality training occurred while he was a Fogarty Fellow at the National Institutes of Arthritis, Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Diseases, National Institutes of Health (1982-1985) and subsequently as a Visiting Scientist in the Department of Cell Biology, Harvard Medical School. He returned to Italy in 1986 and held numerous academic positions in Genova (Istituto Nazionale per la Ricerca sul Cancro (1986-1995), Rome (Director of the Laboratory of Tissue Engineering at the Istituto Dermopatico dell'Immacolata) and Venice (Scientific Director of the Veneto Eye Bank Foundation (2002-to date). Recently, he became Director of the new Center for Regenerative Medicine at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia.

Dr. De Luca has been a pioneer in developing methods of using adult epithelial stem cells to treat burn patients as well as patients with damaged corneas. To date, he and his colleagues have treated over 240 patients with damaged corneas. Dr. De Luca has also developed procedures for treating patients with vitiligo using co-cultures of keratinocytes and melanocytes that are grafted onto patients following laser ablation of the epidermis. In addition, he has recently reported the first successful clinical trial using genetically corrected epidermal stem cells to treat a patient with the inherited skin blistering disease junctional epidermolysis bullosa.

The successful adaptation of Dr. De Luca's methods for maintaining epithelia stem cells in culture into clinical applications is a wonderful example of translational research. It also provides a very compelling demonstration of what has already been accomplished by using adult stem cells for clinical applications and a tantalizing glimpse into the future use of stem cells for many other clinical applications.