



News from the Hereditary Disease Foundation

We are excited to share news about recent changes to our leadership.

Our Board of Directors has elected Karen Newman as Chair. Karen has been an active member of the Board for over seven years, serving as chair of both the audit committee and our annual gala as well as taking leadership roles in fundraising and marketing. She succeeds former Chair David Zwally who will remain on the Board.



Karen Newman

Karen has an extensive career in the healthcare supply and pharmaceutical industries, holding management positions at Baxter Healthcare and other corporations. She served in leadership positions at community and charitable organizations focused on education and advancing the well-being of youth and families. Karen comes from a family that has been impacted by Huntington's disease. Her oldest sister, Penny, passed away 10 years ago after a long battle with HD.

“As a member of an HD family, I understand how devastating this disease is and am passionate about finding a cure. I am honored to take on this new role,” Karen said. “We thank David for his outstanding service over the past 10 years. I look forward to continuing to work with him, our other board members, and the distinguished scientists on our Scientific Advisory Board as we broaden the presence of the Hereditary Disease Foundation and increase our research funding.”

We are also delighted to announce four new members of our Board of Directors, Lauren Baker Pinkus, Tacie Fox, C. Frank Bennett, and Leslie Thompson. Both Lauren and Tacie have extensive business experience and personal knowledge of HD, and they and their families have been generous and steadfast supporters of the Hereditary Disease Foundation for many years. Frank and Leslie are distinguished scientists and longstanding members of our Scientific Advisory Board, where they play leadership roles in setting the scientific agenda of the Foundation. We are thrilled to welcome them to the Hereditary Disease Foundation Board!



Lauren Baker Pinkus

Tacie Fox

C. Frank Bennett

Leslie Thompson

More about our new Board Members

Lauren Baker Pinkus is a board and committee member at several philanthropies in the New York metropolitan area. These organizations span the arts, children's health and welfare, and community development. She is a member of the Guggenheim Photography Council at the Guggenheim Museum, a supporter of City Harvest and a board member of the Washington Square Park Conservancy. She was an early sponsor of America's Future Through Academic Progress (AFTAP), which provides mentorship and supplementary educational programs for children in the South Bronx. She also served on the Art Selection and Acquisition Committee at Westchester Medical Center's Maria Fareri Children's Hospital.

Tacie Fox is a trustee of the Fox Family Foundation, whose sole purpose is to support research that can alter the course of Huntington's disease. Since its inception in 1997, the Fox Family Foundation has provided annual grants to the Hereditary Disease Foundation. The Fox family prioritizes grants that accelerate the development of near-term therapies to slow HD's progression. Tacie is also involved with the Huntington Study Group and served on the Steering Committee for both the Signal and Reach2HD drug trials. With a 30-year history in financial services, Tacie is currently the Chief Investment Officer for Fox Financial Investments.

C. Frank Bennett, PhD is the Chief Scientific Officer and Neurology Franchise Leader at Ionis Pharmaceuticals and is one of the company's founding members. At Ionis, Frank is responsible for preclinical antisense drug discovery and antisense technology research and has been involved in the development of antisense oligonucleotides as therapeutic agents. He has published more than 230 papers in the field of antisense research and development and has more than 174 issued US patents. Frank received HDF's 2018 Leslie Gehry Brenner Prize for Innovation in Science and the 2019 Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences.

Leslie M. Thompson, PhD is the Donald Bren and Chancellor's Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior and the Department of Neurobiology and Behavior at the University of California, Irvine. Leslie has studied Huntington's disease for most of her scientific career. She was a member of the HDF's Venezuela Project that identified the causative gene for HD in 1993. Her work is focused on understanding how the HD mutation damages brain cells and identifying targets for new drugs to prevent or ameliorate the damage. Leslie is an American Association for Advancement of Science Fellow. She received the HDF's Leslie Gehry Brenner Prize for Innovation in Science in 2013.

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