**Whitworth Speech [EZ Speech No. 16078]**

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Remarks by Mrs. Fernanda Whitworth at a fundraising event for the Immu-notherapy Foundation.

GOOD EVENING, EVERYONE; I’M SO VERY GRATEFUL THAT YOU ALL TOOK THE TIME OUT OF YOUR BUSY LIVES TO BE WITH [US/ME] HERE US TONIGHT — AND I THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART. [PAUSE]

CANCER IS AN ANCIENT DISEASE.

THE DINOSAURS GOT CANCER.

SO DID THEIR ANCESTORS.

THERE’S EVEN FOSSIL EVIDENCE THAT, 600 MILLION YEARS AGO, THE VERY EARLIEST MULTI-CELLED ANIMALS ON EARTH — MEM-BERS OF THE SPONGE FAMILY — GOT CANCER. THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF EVOLUTION, WHEREVER THERE’S BEEN LIFE, THERE’S BEEN CANCER. SO TO SAY THAT CANCER IS “OLDER THAN THE HILLS” IS ALMOST *LITERALLY* TRUE, SINCE THE HIMALA­YAS WERE FORMED ONLY ABOUT 60 MILLION YEARS AGO.

AND OF COURSE, CANCER’S BEEN A SCOURGE TO HUMAN BEINGS FOR AS LONG AS THERE’VE BEEN HUMAN BEINGS — IN FACT, SINCE LONG BEFORE THE EMERGENCE OF *HOMO SAPIENS* AS A SPECIES. PALEONTOLOTISTS HAVE DISCOVERED FOSSIL EVI-DENCE OF CANCER IN OUR PRE-HUMAN ANCESTORS DATING TO A MILLION AND A HALF YEARS AGO.

THE EARLIEST KNOWN DESCRIPTION OF HUMAN CANCER AP-PEARS IN AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN TEXTBOOK ON MEDICINE DATING TO AROUND 3000 BCE. THIS PAPYRUS ALSO DESCRIBES WHAT IS PROBABLY THE FIRST DOCUMENTED CANCER TREATMENT EVER; IT INVOLVED BURNING THE CANCER OUT WITH THE USE OF A CAU-TERIZATION TOOL CALLED A “FIRE DRILL.” DOESN’T *THAT* SOUND LOVELY!? THE BOOK’S CHAPTER ON CANCER ENDS WITH THE OMI-NOUS CONCLUSION: *“THERE IS NO TREATMENT.”*

NEEDLESS TO SAY, WE’VE COME A LONG WAY SINCE 3000 BCE. NOT NEARLY FAR ENOUGH, OF COURSE, BECAUSE TOO MANY OF OUR LOVED ONES ARE STILL DIEING EVERY YEAR FROM CANCER OF ONE FORM OF THE DISEASE OR OTHER. BUT THERE *HAS* BEEN PROGRESS — TREMENDOUS PROGRESS, IN FACT. AND TONITE, YOU’RE GOING TO HEAR ABOUT SOME OF THE MOST EXCITING BREAKTHROUGHS AND DISCOVERIES THAT THE MEDICAL COM-MUMITY HAS MADE OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS IN THE TREATEMENT OF CANCER.

A GOOD DEAL OF THIS PROGRESS HAS COME FROM THE FIELD OF IMMUNOTHERAPY.

NOW, DOCTORS HAVE BEEN USING CHEMICALS — ANTI-CANCER DRUGS — TO TREAT THIS DISEASE FOR MORE THAN 70 YEARS. IRONICALLY, THE FIRST CANCER DRUG EVER APPROVED BY THE FDA WAS ACTUALLY BASED ON A POISONOUS GAS WAS USED DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR.

SINCE 1947, WHEN SYDNEY FARBER OF BOSTON’S CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL SUCCESSFULY USED A DRUG CALLED AMINOPTERIN TO KICK A PATIENT’S LEUKEMIA INTO REMISSION, LITERALLY DOZEN OF ANTI-CANCER DRUGS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED, TESTED, AND USED.

SOME OF THESE DRUGS WERE DESIGNED TO ATTACK SPECIFIC FORMS OF CANCER. THEN, STARTING IN THE MID-SEVENTIES, PHYSICIANS BEGAN USING THESE DRUGS IN VARIOUS COMBINA-TIONS, AND A SEVERAL OF THESE “COCKTAILS” RESULTED IN MUCH BETTER CURE-RATES AND REMISSIONS THAN THE SINGLE DRUGS DID ON THEIR OWN. LATER STILL, DOCTORS BEGAN USING THESE COCKTAILS IN CONJUNCTION WITH RADIATION THERAPY, AND IN A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF CASES, THIS COMBINATION OF TREATMENTS LED TO EVEN BETTER CURE-RATES.

THE PROBLEM WAS THAT ALL THESE CHEMICALS ARE ESSENTIAL-LY POISONS. THEY’RE TOXINS DESIGNED TO KILL CANCER CELLS. BUT, LIKE RADIATION THERAPY, THEY ALSO KILL HEALTHY CELLS INTO THE BARGAIN. AND WHILE DOCTORS HAVE FOUND BETTER AND MORE PRECISE WAYS OF “TARGETTING” THEIR DRUGS AND THEIR X-RAY BEAMS, THE FACT REMAINS THAT — AS ALMOST EVERY CANCER PATIENT WILL TELL YOU — THE CURE IS OFTEN WORSE THAN THE DISEASE.

THIS ALL BEGAN TO CHANGE IN THE 1980’S, WHEN IMMUNE-CELL THERAPY FOR CANCER WAS INTRODUCED BY STEVEN ROSEN-BERG AND HIS COLLEAGES AT THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE IN BETHESDA. THEIR SUCCESSES, THOUGH LIMITED, REPRE­SENTED THE DAWN OF A DRAMATICALLY NEW APPROCH TO CANC-ER TREATMENT — IMMUNOTHERAPY — WHICH USES NON-TOXIC DRUGS AND HEALTHY TISSUE NOT TO KILL THE CANCER CELLS DIRECTLY, BUT RATHER TO MOBILIZE THE BODY’S OWN IMMUNE SYSTEM, ITS OWN DEFENSE MECHANISM, TO DO THE WORK.

THE PACE OF CANCER IMMUNOTHERAPY HAS ACCELERATED TRE-MENDOUSLY OVER THE PAST DECADE, AND IMPORTANT NEW DE-VELOPMENTS IN THIS FIELD ARE OCCURING ALMOST DAILY. WHEN MY HUSBAND, RALPH, CONTRACTED CANCER OF THE TONGUE IN 2013, WE THOUGHT WE’D BE IN FOR CLEAR SAILING ONCE HE WAS PRONOUNCED CANCER-FREE A YEAR LATER, AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS OF OF CHEMO- AND RADIATION THERAPY. BUT BY THE SUMMER OF 2014, METASTATIC CELLS FROM HIS ORIGINAL MOUTH CANCER HAD APPARENTLY SPREAD TO HIS LUNGS.

AFTER CONSULTING WITH A NUMBER OF EXPERTS IN THE FIELD, RALPH PLACED HIMSELF UNDER THE CARE OF DR. [NAME], WHO HAD JUST RELOCATED HIS PRACTICE TO SAN DIEGO. AT DR. [NAME]’S SUGGESTION, RALPH AGREED TO TRY A CUTTING-EDGE TREATMENT INVOLVING IMMUNOLOGY, SPECIFICALLY WITH [DRUG NAME], A DRUG THAT BLOCKS THE EXPRESSION OF A CERTAIN CANCER-TRIGGERING GENE.

IN THE END, RALPH’S CANCER WAS OF A HIGHLY RESISTANT TYPE, AND HE LOST HIS BATTLE IN 2016. BUT NOT BEFORE HE’D DE-CIDED — WITH MY TOTAL SUPPORT, AGREEMENT, AND COMMIT-MENT — TO CONTRIBUTE IN A MEANINGFUL WAY TO THE FIGHT AGAINST CONCER.

HENCE WAS BORN the IDEA FOR THE IMMUNOLOGY FOUNDATION, FOR AS A RESULT OF HIS OWN TREATMENT AND ALL THE RE-SEARCH HE’D DONE ON THE SUBJECT, RALPH DECIDED THAT IT WAS THE SCIENCE OF IMMUNOLOGY THAT HELD THE MOST PROM­ISE OF ULTIMATELY ELIMINATING THE SCOURGE OF CANCER.

WITH THE HELP OF MANY, MANY GENEROUS FRIENDS AND COL-LEGUES, WE RAISED THE FUNDS TO ESTABLISH THE IMMUNOLOGY FOUNDATION ON THE [NAME] CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT SAN DIEGO. A SPECIAL LAB WAS BUILT . . . TOP-NOTCH CLINCIANS WERE HIRED . . . AND OUR FIRST IMMUNOTHER-APY PATIENTS ARE SCHEDULED TO BE ADMITTED IN THE FALL.

NOW THE REAL WORK BEGINS — BOTH FOR CANCER SCIENCE AND FOR US.

THE WORK OF THE IMMUNOLOGY FOUNDATION WILL NEED TO BE SUPPORTED FOR YEARS TO COME. EVEN AS NEWER AND MORE EFFECTIVE IMMUNOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS CONTINUE TO BE DEVELOPED AND TESTED, CANCER’S NOT GOING TO BE ELIMINAT-ED OVERNIGHT. SOONER, PERHAPS, THAN WE MIGHT HAVE LEGI-TIMATELY BEEN ABLE TO HOPE EVEN FIVE YEARS AGO; BUT IT’S SURE NOT GOING TO HAPPEN TOMORROW, OR NEXT MONTH, OR NEXT YEAR.

IN A MOMENT, YOU’RE GOING TO HEAR FROM THREE EMINENT [SCIENTISTS/DOCTORS/CLINICIANS] WHO’RE WORKING WITH US AT THE IMMOLOGY FOUNDATION, AND THEY’RE GOING TO BRING US UP TO SPEED ON THE MOST PROMISING ADVANCES NOW BEING MADE IN THE IMMUNOLOGICAL TREATMENT OF CANCER.

AND THEN SOMEBODY’S GOING TO ASK YOU FOR MONEY.

MONEY TO CARRY ON THE CRUCIAL, CUTTING-EDGE, LIFE-SAVING WORK OF THE FOUNDATION.

MONEY TO ADVANCE OUR ABILITY TO MOBILIZE THE HUMAN IMMUNE SYSTEM TO FIGHT CANCER.

MONEY FOR MORE RESEARCH INTO THE POSSIBILITIES OF *GENE* THERAPY — IN ADDITION TO HORMONAL THERAPY — IN TREATING, OR EVEN PREVENTING, OF CANCER.

MONEY TO CARRY ON MY DEAR RALPH’S LEGACY OF COMMUNITY SERVICE AND HIS COMMITMENT TO THE BETTERMENT OF OTHERS.

WHEN YOU HEAR WHAT OUR NEXT SPEAKERS HAVE TO SAY, I’M SURE YOU’LL BE AS EXCITED AS I AM ABOUT WHAT OUR FOUNDA-TION IS DOING, AND ABOUT HOW YOU CAN — IN RALPH’S [BELOV-ED] MEMORY — BECOME PART OF THIS GREAT NEW AGE OF HOPE FOR CANCER PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

BUT BEFORE I INTRODUCE OUR FIRT SPEAKER THIS EVENING, I’D LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT TO INTRODUCE YOU TO, AND THANK, MY VERY DEAR FRIEND, STEPHANY [LAST NAME], WHO HELPED ME OR-GANIZE THIS EVENT, AND WHO’S BEEN AN ABSOLUTELY ROCK TO ME DURING MY TIME OF GRIEVING AND LEARNING HOW TO LIVE PEACEFULLY AS A WIDOW. [TO STEPHANY] THANK YOU, DEAR HEART, FOR EVERYTHING YOU’VE DONE FOR ME!

NOW, I’D LIKE TO INTRODUCE DR. [NAME & POSITION/TITLE], WHO’LL TELL US ABOUT [SUBJECT OF FIRST SPEAKER’S TALK].

DR. [NAME] . . . .

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