



Sherman Prize Announces 2021 Honorees

2021 Sherman Prize Recipients Are Transforming IBD Care by Advancing Understanding of IBD Genetics, Establishing Best Practices in Surgery and Collecting and Analyzing Big Data to Improve Outcomes

BOCA RATON, Fla., October 5, 2021 – The Bruce and Cynthia Sherman Charitable Foundation today announced the recipients of the 2021 Sherman Prizes and Sherman Emerging Leader Prize, recognizing excellence in the field of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, also known as inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD):

Sherman Prize Honorees

Judy H. Cho, MD, Dean and Ward-Coleman Professor of Translational Genetics, Director, Charles Bronfman Institute for Personalized Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, NY

Phillip R. Fleshner, MD, FASCRS, Shierley, Jesslyne, and Emmeline Widjaja Chair in Colorectal Surgery, Program Director, Colorectal Surgery Residency, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA

Sherman Emerging Leader Prize Honoree

Edward L. Barnes, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Medicine and Associate Program Director, Gastroenterology and Hepatology Fellowship Program, UNC Department of Medicine's Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, University of North Carolina School of Medicine, Chapel Hill, NC

“Today, thanks to the passion and perseverance of researchers and clinicians like Drs. Cho, Fleshner and Barnes, outcomes for people with IBD are so much better than they were when my father was first diagnosed with Crohn’s disease,” said Bruce Sherman, Founder of the Sherman Prize. “Cynthia and I have been inspired by these honorees as they represent the tremendous work being done along the bench-to-bedside continuum to create a healthier future for people with Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis. By championing excellence, we hope many others in the field see their achievements and are motivated to reach higher and work harder to improve IBD care and work toward cures.”

The 2021 Sherman Prize recipients are innovators and challengers of the status quo, representing diverse IBD sub-specialties and applying their unique talents to help patients coping with some of the most intractable challenges of these diseases. The Sherman Prize winners will be honored at the Advances in IBD conference in Orlando, Florida on Dec. 9, 2021.

Dr. Judy H. Cho is awarded a \$100,000 Sherman Prize for her pioneering IBD genetics research that has advanced understanding of the underlying causes of IBD and paved the way for personalized treatment approaches. One of the leaders of the team that identified the first gene for Crohn’s disease, NOD2, Dr. Cho has contributed to virtually every major discovery in IBD genetics over the past 20 years. Dr. Cho explores how to prioritize new therapeutic targets and tailor biologic agents for individual patients who don’t respond to current therapies. Her research on the involvement of IL-23 in the disease cascade led to anti-IL-23 therapies that are widely used to treat Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis. Now she’s exploring new targets and combination therapies and supporting junior colleagues in their research to help ensure the work continues. Her hope for the future is that with greater understanding of the genetics of these diseases, gene therapies will be made possible – putting the potential for true cures within reach for even the most severe forms of disease.

Dr. Phillip R. Fleshner receives the \$100,000 Sherman Prize for his bold approach to research, challenging accepted conventions and establishing evidenced-based surgical best practices. An outstanding surgeon who has created an entirely new field of study, Translational IBD Surgery Research, Dr. Fleshner has identified numerous ways to improve patients' outcomes after surgery. Thanks to his research, patients are no longer treated with high-dose steroids before surgery, and they can skip nasogastric tube feeding and go straight to a regular diet after surgery – both tremendous advances in patient safety and comfort. Dr. Fleshner has also led the vast majority of research on the relationship between biologics and surgery, establishing best practices for their use in the surgical setting. His work has set the stage for using biomarkers to predict surgical outcomes, and by engaging nearly 2,000 patients to participate in research, Dr. Fleshner has developed significant biobanks of data that are helping researchers around the world in their quest for personalized treatments. A committed teacher and mentor, Dr. Fleshner has trained hundreds of surgeons, challenging the next generation of surgeon researchers to drive greater advances in patient care.

Dr. Edward L. Barnes is awarded the \$25,000 Sherman Emerging Leader Prize for applying his expertise in epidemiology and the study of “big data” to tackle one of the most difficult complications for ulcerative colitis patients – the development of pouchitis after J-pouch surgery. This painful inflammation of the pouch lining impacts up to 80 percent of patients after surgery. To better understand the condition, Dr. Barnes created the first validated algorithm to define pouchitis in large databases, making it possible to describe pouch outcomes on a larger scale. Today, Dr. Barnes leads the pioneering PROP-RD study (A Prospective Registry for the Study of Outcomes and Predictors in Pouchitis and Pouch-Related Disorders) to investigate real-world outcomes after pouch surgery. Through this research, Dr. Barnes hopes to be able to predict which patients are at greatest risk for pouchitis and identify interventions to prevent them from developing the condition. This epidemiological study, and a similar one he's conducting in Denmark, are giving the IBD field insights into the prevalence and treatment of pouchitis on a larger scale – opening avenues for the development of novel therapies.

“Across the field of IBD research and care there are thousands of IBD professionals striving to make life better for patients, and Drs. Cho, Fleshner and Barnes stand out as pioneers in this field,” said Dr. Dermot P.B. McGovern, Sherman Prize Selection Committee Chair and the Joshua L. and Lisa Z. Greer Endowed Chair in Inflammatory Bowel Disease Genetics at Cedars-Sinai. “Their commitment to improving outcomes and mentoring the next generation of physician scientists has undoubtedly impacted the lives of countless people with IBD today, as well as those who may be diagnosed tomorrow. On behalf of the Selection Committee, I’m thrilled to recognize these innovators and out-of-the box thinkers for their accomplishments and proud to stand with them as the field pushes ever forward to greater advances and hopefully, someday, cures.”

About the Sherman Prize

The Sherman Prize was founded in 2016 by the Bruce and Cynthia Sherman Charitable Foundation to honor innovators from a variety of professional disciplines who have dedicated their careers to the fight to overcome IBD and represent “Excellence in Crohn’s and Colitis” in their chosen endeavors. Every year, two \$100,000 Sherman Prizes are awarded to IBD visionaries to recognize their exceptional and pioneering contributions that have transformed the care of people with IBD. A \$25,000 Sherman Emerging Leader Prize is awarded to an IBD professional who, while early in her or his career, has contributed to an advancement and shows great promise for significant future contributions. Visit [ShermanPrize.org](https://www.ShermanPrize.org) to view the Honor Roll of Sherman Prize recipients, watch their inspiring short tribute films and sign up to receive notification of the 2022 nomination cycle.

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