



Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures  
900 S. 74th Plaza, Ste. 301  
Omaha, NE 68114

402-390-2461  
www.nebraskacures.com

*Cures Save Lives*

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## Nebraska Coalition honors John and Lynne Boyer

**T**he Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures honored John and Lynne Boyer at its annual tribute luncheon, held May 13, 2013 at the Happy Hollow Club.

John and Lynne Boyer have spent much of their life giving back to the community. Whether volunteering their time while serving on committees and boards of civic organizations or utilizing their talents and resources to make a difference in other ways, the Boyers have made a difference.

John is president of the Omaha Zoological Board of Directors, secretary for the Omaha Performing Arts Society and is a board member of the Durham Museum. He is past chairman of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce as well as having served on the board of the University of Nebraska Foundation.

Lynne currently serves on the Executive Committee of Bellevue University, Board of Directors of Joslyn Art Museum, the University of Nebraska Medical Center Campaign Leadership committee and the Eppley Cancer Center Advisory board. She is on the Executive Committee of the Nebraska Coalition for



**(L to R) Dr. Harold Maurer, Beverly Maurer, Lynne Boyer and John Boyer**

Lifesaving Cures and past president of Children's Hospital Foundation and the Arthritis Foundation.

John and Lynne have two sons, David and Michael. Michael and his wife Holly have a son, Luke and a daughter, Mia.

The Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures is grateful to the Boyers for their support of medical research and the Coalition.



**John and Lynne Boyer accept an award at their tribute luncheon.**

**New  
Website  
Launches**

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## Early phase stem cell trials show promise in stroke and blindness

May 30, 2013 | California Institute for Regenerative Medicine

**T**he very first time a potential therapy gets tested in people it is part of what is called a phase one trial, which is very small and is mostly just testing to make sure the drug, cells or device are even safe. Until the start of a trial the potential therapy has generally only been tested in lab animals, which can be quite different from humans.

With that caveat in mind, there is some hopeful news coming out of a phase one trial testing stem cell-based approaches to treating stroke and blindness.

The stroke trial in Scotland is testing a type of neural stem cell to see if it can help people who have had strokes recover function. People in the trial are reporting better grip strength and more coordination. That said, because it is such a small trial there is no way of knowing whether some of the improvements would have happened anyway—people do improve over time after a stroke.

“We are very excited about this trial,” said Dr. Clare Walton in an interview printed in the London Telegraph. “However, we are currently at the beginning of a very long road, and significant further development is needed before stem cell therapy can be regarded as a possible treatment.”

This trial is testing a type of neural stem cell injected directly into the place where the stroke happened. Other groups are working toward trials with other types of stem cells or ways of delivering those cells to the brain.

Two other trials, led by Advanced Cell Technology, are showing very early positive signs. Both trials are testing cells derived from embryonic stem cells to see if they can replace the function of cells lost in the back of the eye in people with macular degeneration or Stargardt’s macular dystrophy. Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness. In very preliminary results, one person went from being effectively blind to having 20/40 vision.

A story in New Scientist quotes Gary Rabin, chief executive officer of Advanced Cell Technology, as saying, “There’s a guy walking around who was blind, but now can see. With that sort of vision, you can have a driver’s licence.”

As with the stroke results, it is too early to know if the cells are responsible for the change, work long-term or are safe. That is the point of starting slow with phase one trials before working up to trials that include more people and will give a better indication of whether the treatment works.

## Nebraska Coalition Launches New Website

August 5, 2013

**T**he Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures gave its website a facelift. Everything you want to know about us and about stem cells can now be found at the same address as before — [www.nebraskacures.com](http://www.nebraskacures.com).

We will continually be adding to the site as we go along. We hope if you have a topic you want to know more about or, have information we should include on our site, you will let us know.



*Support our effort to protect stem cell research in Nebraska by joining our Coalition.*

[www.nebraskacures.com](http://www.nebraskacures.com)

# Stem Cell Profiteering is Focus of Luncheon and Omaha Science Café

June 11, 2013 | UNMC News

**T**he irresponsible use of stem cells for profit was the focus of a Lunch & Learn held at the Thompson Alumni Center on the campus of the University of Nebraska Omaha.

Gary Susser, a trial attorney and vocal activist supporting stem cell research, was the featured speaker. Susser, who appeared with his wife, Judith, on “60 Minutes,” discussed how he and his wife exposed the dangers of stem cells being sold over the Internet by profiteers on the prime time program.

In 2011-12 “60 Minutes” worked with the Sussers, whose child Adam suffers from cerebral palsy, to investigate one of the online purveyors of stem cell treatments, Stem Tech Labs of Ecuador. The show captured American doctor Dan Ecklund on a teleconference from Ecuador promising the Sussers that their son would improve from four treatments at a cost of \$5,000 each. The Sussers did not let this doctor treat their child, but instead helped expose the scam on national television in hopes of helping prevent other families the pain, expense and heartache of such false promises.

Susser was joined by David Crouse, Ph.D., president of the Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures and emeritus

professor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Dr. Crouse has taken a lead role in promoting an understanding of the science and ethics in stem cell research, as well as developing programs and teaching courses on “Responsible Conduct in Research” for graduate students, post-doctorate and junior faculty of UNMC.

Susser and Dr. Crouse also presented on this topic at the Science Café, presented by the Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures. Science Cafés involve a face-to-face conversation with a scientist about current science topics, are open to everyone (21 and older), and take place in casual settings like pubs and coffeehouses.



**Gary Susser and Gary Crouse, Ph.D., were featured speakers at a recent Lunch & Learn. Photo courtesy KVNO News.**

## Holland marks naming ceremony with humor, inspiration

July 26, 2013 | UNMC News

**C**alling himself “a living example of the need for regenerative medicine,” Dick Holland used humor to mark the ribbon-cutting for the Mary and Dick Holland Regenerative Medicine Program, held Thursday, July 25 at the Durham Research Center II.

Holland, university officials and other guests rode the elevator to the sixth floor of Durham II to cut the ribbon for the newly named program. While Holland was willing to joke, others who spoke at a short event before the ribbon-cutting took the philanthropist much more seriously.

UNMC supporter Mike Yanney called him “the single greatest difference-maker this city has.” In the past several decades, Holland “has done a lot of things to change human lives,” Yanney said, citing his support not only of UNMC, but of cultural and educational institutions.

“I’ve never seen anyone like Dick Holland, who does it with

flair, who does it with a lot of humor, and who never asks for anything in return,” Yanney said.

UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D., called Holland and his late wife, Mary, “the epitome of giving.”

“Without Dick and Mary, UNMC would not be where it is today,” he said. “They have supported construction of the Durham Research Centers, the Sorrell Center for Health Science Education, the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center, and many others, including the College of Public Health. We could not be more grateful to Mary and Dick for the gift to this regenerative medicine program.”

The regenerative medicine program brings together forward-thinking scientists and clinicians who are committed to understanding the basic science behind tissue engineering and development, Dr. Maurer said.

Holland said such programs are needed in medicine today. “The ability to build organs and change lives is a great tool,” Holland said. “I know this isn’t going to be a cinch. Research has many paths, and some of them are very disappointing. You have to get over all the disappointments and just slog on. But I wish everybody who’s working on this Godspeed. I think that if you strive to be leaders, you will get the full dose of glory.”