



Immunology Center of Georgia launches endowed lectureship to honor founders' mothers, advance research and education

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AUGUSTA, Ga. (June 25, 2024) – The [Immunology Center of Georgia](#) (IMMCG) has established the Margaret-Gertraud Immunology Lectureship, funded by the center's founding co-directors, [Catherine "Lynn" Hedrick](#), PhD, and [Klaus Ley](#), MD, during the 2024 [Augusta Gives](#) philanthropy campaign. The new lectureship, named in honor of their late mothers, aims to advance immunology education and research.

Hedrick and Ley have both experienced personal loss due to diseases that can be exacerbated by the immune system's response. Hedrick watched her mother, Margaret, battle type 1 diabetes, which sparked Hedrick's pursuit of medical research at a young age.

"My mother died at age 65 after a lifetime of struggling with very serious complications from type 1 diabetes, which is an autoimmune disease," said Hedrick. "Helping her through those health challenges made me want to find a cure, which led me to pursue a career in science."

Ley's mother, Gertraud, passed away at the age of 53 from lung fibrosis, a devastating condition without a clear cause.

"Lung fibrosis is progressive and affects the ability to breathe," Ley explained. "This condition, like many others, is closely tied to the immune system, and my mother's battle motivated me to focus on immunological research."

IMMCG was founded in 2022 as part of the [Medical College of Georgia](#) at Augusta University. The new lectureship is designed to attract distinguished speakers from around the world to share their expertise on the immune system's role in illnesses such as cancer, diabetes, and various autoimmune diseases.

“Endowed lectureships provide the enhanced funding necessary to attract and bring renowned speakers to our campus,” said Ley.

In addition to honoring the legacies of Margaret and Gertraud, Hedrick emphasized the importance of educating the public about immunology's critical role in multiple diseases.

“This is a way to remember our mothers and also to educate and inspire others by sharing groundbreaking advancements in immunology,” she said. “We want to bring world-class experts to Augusta University to discuss the latest research with our campus and community.”

The target audience for the lectures will include students, faculty, community members, and professionals in the field of immunology. The selection of speakers will be a collaborative effort involving IMMCG faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students to ensure a diverse range of topics and perspectives.

“Dr. Hedrick and I will advise but we will not make the final decision on speakers,” Ley said. “Input from our academic community will be crucial to the selection process.”

The inaugural lecture is planned for the spring of 2025, with efforts already underway to secure a prominent speaker. Ley and Hedrick hope this new initiative will encourage others to support similar educational endeavors.

“Anyone who is interested in the immune system and wants to learn about advancements in research should plan to join us at these annual events,” said Hedrick. “We encourage others to consider [supporting this lectureship](#) or starting one of their own to help Augusta University continue to grow these community engagement opportunities.”

DOWNLOAD: [Photos](#) of Catherine “Lynn” Hedrick, PhD, Klaus Ley, MD, and their mothers.

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