



Oral Cancer Foundation founder named Survivor Circle Award winner

The American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) has named Brian Hill of Newport Beach, Calif., as its 2010 Survivor Circle Award winner. Hill will be recognized with a trophy and a \$1,000 prize during the Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, November 2, 2010, during ASTRO's 52nd Annual Meeting in San Diego. He has chosen to donate the funds from the award to benefit The Oral Cancer Foundation, the nonprofit he started a decade ago.

The Survivor Circle Award recognizes a cancer survivor in the San Diego area who has given back to the community by devoting his or her time to helping others with cancer. Hill was diagnosed with Stage 4 metastatic tonsil cancer in 1997. When he was going through treatment, he had many questions about side effects and realized there was a lack of information and awareness about head and neck cancer even though the disease has a very high death rate, due to it being caught at a late stage in most cases.

"There was a huge lack of information available, and I was desperate to find someone to talk to who had gone through the same thing I was experiencing," Hill said. "I knew that if I was feeling this way, there had to be others feeling my frustrations too. I then became a student of the disease. "

After Hill completed his grueling but successful radiation treatments at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, he and his wife Ingrid founded The Oral Cancer Foundation in 1999, which is now a national nonprofit charity. Besides its original mission of patient support, it is involved in advocacy issues, sponsorship of research and public awareness.

"Being chosen by ASTRO in this way is a huge honor. I feel as if this is the second time I am the beneficiary, as I owe my being here today to the doctors and radiation technology, which saved my life." He said.

As the pro bono director of the foundation, Hill spends his time speaking at symposia and universities worldwide. He has also worked as an advocate with congressmen and senators on issues as varied as the tobacco bill, Medicare issues of post-treatment patients, the HPV vaccine and the issues of early cancer detection.

Hill was inducted as the first non-doctor member of the American Academy of Oral Medicine in recognition of contributions to oral cancer public literacy and awareness programs and the promotion of early diagnosis of oral cancer via free public screenings. He has also received awards from the NIH/NIDCR and the Chicago Dental Society and become a recipient of NYU's prestigious Strusser award for public service. He sits on oral cancer work groups from the CDC to numerous professional dental and medical society organizations. "Congratulations to Brian Hill for winning this prestigious award,"

Anthony Zietman, M.D., ASTRO president and a radiation oncologist at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, said. "Brian embodies everything that the Survivor Circle

Award stands for. He beat the odds with his own cancer and has worked tirelessly to promote awareness for an under-recognized type of cancer. I'm proud to have him as a part of the Annual Meeting."

The Survivor Circle was established in 2003 as a way for ASTRO to give back to the cities that it visits during its Annual Meeting. Each year, ASTRO partners with two local organizations to establish relationships with patient advocacy organizations and radiation oncologists and to raise money to support these groups in their work to help people living with cancer and their loved ones. This year ASTRO has partnered with Mama's Kitchen and The Emilio Naras Foundation.

The ASTRO Annual Meeting is the premier scientific meeting in radiation oncology and attracts more than 11,000 attendees of various disciplines, including oncologists, physicists, biologists, nurses and other healthcare professionals from all over the world. The theme of this year's meeting is "Gathering Evidence, Proving Value" and the program will examine the realities of practicing medicine in 2010.

Provided by American Society for Radiation Oncology