



## HIGHLIGHT: Graves' Disease Foundation

### Annual Patient and Family Conference

The Graves' Disease Foundation's Patient & Family Conference was held on October 16–18 in Charlotte, NC. It was the largest meeting ever for the organization and featured nine specialists and researchers discussing Graves' and thyroid diseases, plus thyroid eye disease. The Foundation's Chief Medical & Scientific Officer Terry J. Smith, MD served as the 2009 Conference Program Chair. The conference provided 200 cumulative hours of family and patient support groups and 1,000 of overall patient education. A total of 16 hours of Nursing Continuing Education Hours were awarded for attending this meeting.

The Graves' Disease Foundation concluded its Patient Education Conference with an Awards Banquet to recognize volunteers for their outstanding performance to further the mission of the Foundation.

Nancy Patterson, PhD who started the Graves' Disease Foundation in 1990 received the "Founder's Award" for her initiative to help others with Graves' disease better understand the symptoms and treatment for it. Nancy, after being diagnosed with Graves' assumed it would be something to be treated, take the medicine, and get on

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— Nancy Patterson, PhD

Among the topics presented at the meeting were the following: 1) What's NEW in our understanding of Graves' Disease; 2) Fat & Boney decompressive surgery in Ophthalmopathy; 3) Pros & Cons of Radioactive Iodine with hyperthyroid patients with GO; 4) Steroids vs. Radiotherapy in the treatment of Graves' Eye disease; 5) Surgical management of eyelid problems with Graves' Orbitopathy; 6) How Doctors treat Graves' disease — Medications, RAI, & Surgery; 7) Medical management of Graves' Orbitopathy & correction of double vision; 8) Why my emotions are changing with Graves' — a Patient's perspective; 9) I'm pregnant — how will the management of my Graves' disease change?; 10) Diagnosis & Treatment of Children with Graves' disease; 11) Dermatology and Graves' and 12) Graves' Disease: an Autoimmune Disease. The following physicians participated in these presentations: Terry J. Smith, Ray Douglas, Larry Wood, Alon Kahana, Jonathan Dutton, David S. Cooper, Jonathan Dutton, Ira Lesser, Richard Kleinmann, John A. Thompson and Noel Rose.

with life — unfortunately this is NOT always the case. When it quickly became a struggle, she began to look for information, and for people to talk to that had faced the same concerns. Unfortunately at that time there was no organization with this mission. Undaunted, Nancy took it upon herself to create such an organization. “Through these years, I have been honored to join hands with many dedicated volunteers and physicians who believe that the Foundation can educate, encourage and empower patients and caregivers to improve the quality of their lives,” Nancy said. Foundation President Peter Filocamo stated, on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of patients and family members you have counseled, we are all motivated by your vision and mission! The Founder's Award with its story of the Starfish, represents your efforts to make a difference and help one patient at a time.

The GDF awarded its 2009 “Volunteer of the Year” honor to Sharon Barbour from San Jose, California.

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## HIGHLIGHT: : Graves' Disease Foundation, continued Annual Patient and Family Conference

Sharon or 'Ski' was selected for her outstanding dedication to the Foundation as a Facilitator on the Bulletin Board. As a Graves' patient, Ski has advised thousands of patients who posted questions on the Bulletin Board seeking help and support. Peter Filocamo, President, Graves' Disease Foundation described Sharon as a shining example of a volunteer who works tirelessly to assist other Graves' patients who visit the Foundation's website struggling to understand the impact of Graves' disease on their life and their family relationships.

Kathleen Bell Flynn and her husband Steve Flynn received the Foundation's "Making a Difference Award" for their loyal dedication and unwavering commitment. Kathleen and Steve have made outstanding contributions towards our goals and are instrumental in leading us towards a paradigm change for help and hope.

Doctor Terry J. Smith, renowned researcher and Chief Medical & Scientific Officer for the Foundation was given the Foundation's Leadership Award for developing a goal for funding Graves' research plus organizing the medical content of the Patient Conferences and securing medical experts to speak at the meetings.

David Scholl, PhD President & CEO of Diagnostic HYBRIDS was recognized as the the 2009 Conference Presenting Sponsor. In addition, Diagnostic Hybrids has recently launched the Thyretain™ TSI Reporter BioAssay, the first FDA-cleared test that specifically detects thyroid stimulating immunoglobulin in patient serum. Thyretain is to be used as an aid in the differential diagnosis of Graves' disease. GDF is honored to partner with Diagnostic Hybrids to increase patient, public and professional awareness of the seriousness of Graves' disease.

Support Group Leaders "Program Excellence Awards" were given to the Charlotte, North Carolina group led by Adrienne Love and Laurie Eustis and the Belleville, Illinois group led by Becky and Andy Nicholson. These are two of the Foundation's most active Groups in grateful appreciation and recognition of their hard work, devotion and commitment to offering psychological and emotional support to patients and family members.

The 2010 Annual Meeting will take place in San Diego, CA this fall. Details will be available at [www.ngdf.org](http://www.ngdf.org) and in future issues of this Journal.

— Peter Filocamo, President, Graves' Disease Foundation

