



## **Melanoma Research Alliance Holds Record-Breaking Benefit Dinner at Sotheby's New York**

**Washington, DC, November 15, 2013** –The Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA), the leading private funder of melanoma research, raised a record \$6 million for its world-class scientific program during its third biannual benefit dinner at Sotheby's New York this past Tuesday, November 12, 2013.

"We are moved and incredibly grateful for the generosity and dedication of MRA's supporters who made this year's event such an amazing success," said Debra Black, Co-Founder and Chair of the Melanoma Research Alliance. "Our sponsors and allies, as well as the individuals who committed their ongoing support, helped to ensure that we can continue to accelerate the progress against this disease."

The evening drew a capacity crowd of 180 MRA supporters to Sotheby's iconic New York City headquarters on the eve of this week's fall show of contemporary art. Supporters of the organization celebrated recent progress in the field and joined forces to boost MRA's mission by funding the most transformational melanoma research around the globe.

A highlight of the event came during the auction, when attendees pledged to support 11 new MRA Young Investigator Awards. Billionaire and philanthropist Stewart Rahr led the bidding with a commitment to fund four grants, which support the best and brightest early-career scientists. Rahr has previously funded eight of MRA's current pool of 40 Young Investigators, making him the largest single benefactor of the Young Investigator Award Program.

The event included a seated dinner, brief remarks from MRA's leadership and researchers, and a live auction led by Jamie Niven, Chairman of Sotheby's North and South America. The evening's beverages were generously donated by Southern Wine & Spirits of America and Double Cross Vodka. Van Wyck & Van Wyck provided pro bono event planning services that made the evening both exquisite and memorable.

Melanoma is the most deadly and aggressive form of skin cancer and one of the fastest growing cancers in the U.S. Since its founding in 2007, MRA has awarded more than \$49 million worldwide to support leading researchers seeking to better prevent, detect, and treat melanoma. Earlier this year, the organization released its annual Request For Proposals, with plans to award at least an additional \$9 million in its 2014 grants cycle. Due to the ongoing support of its founders, MRA devotes 100% of every dollar raised to its research program; a

rigorous peer-review process ensures that research dollars are allocated to projects with the potential to affect near-term improvements in the paradigm of care.

“It is heartening to see support for MRA’s research mission coming from so many different individuals, organizations, and industries,” said Wendy Selig, President and CEO of the MRA. “While recent scientific and clinical advances have provided new hope for patients, much work remains to develop more effective options for everyone struggling with this disease. The enormous success of this year's benefit dinner helps to ensure that we are able to continue funding the most impactful research, moving closer to defeating melanoma once and for all.”

#### **About the Melanoma Research Alliance**

MRA is a public charity formed in 2007 under the auspices of the Milken Institute, with the generous founding support of Debra and Leon Black. MRA is poised to build on recent momentum in the field, accelerating the pace of scientific discovery and translation in order to eliminate suffering and death due to melanoma. To date, MRA has supported the research of 171 investigators at 80 institutions in 14 countries. MRA’s ability to fund wide-ranging research in melanoma is amplified by unique multi-faceted collaborations and partnerships with individuals, private foundations and corporations. Visit [www.curemelanoma.org](http://www.curemelanoma.org) for more information.

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