

2017 Association of American Physicians George M. Kober Medal

Introduction of Laurie H. Glimcher, MD

Carl F. Nathan

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AAP Kober Medal Presentation

Laurie H. Glimcher personifies the qualities honored by the George M. Kober Medal. A renowned immunologist who has taken on a series of leadership positions in medical education, research, and clinical care, she has played a key role in the rapidly advancing field of immunotherapy and in the lives and careers of scientists who are driving the field forward. Dr. Glimcher (Figure 1), who became President and CEO of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston late last year, had an early exposure to the demands and rewards of a medical career; her father, Melvin Glimcher, was a prominent orthopedic surgeon at Massachusetts General Hospital and Boston Children's Hospital. Over the course of a 40-year career, she has been, in many ways, a pioneer, not only as a scientist but as a model of professional achievement for women in science and academic medicine. Dr. Glimcher graduated from Radcliffe College and earned her medical degree from Harvard Medical School in 1976, followed by internship and residencies at Mass. General and Brigham and Women's Hospital. Her medical school studies sparked a fascination with the immune system and autoimmune disease. From 1979 to 1982, she conducted immunology research at the National Institutes of Health in the lab of the late William Paul, work that would later result in the discovery of the transcription factors XBP1 [...]

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Dr. Glimcher joined the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in 1984, and she was the Irene Heinz Given Professor of Immunology from 1991 to

2011. As a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, she directed one of the world's leading academic immunology programs.

Having devoted her career primarily to laboratory research, Dr. Glimcher decided to broaden her efforts. In 2012, she joined Weill Cornell Medical College as Dean and Professor of Medicine — becoming the first woman to serve as dean at the medical school — and Provost for Medical Affairs at Cornell University. There, she took steps to help women achieve work-life balance, setting up a daycare center and a grant program for postdoctoral fellows who are primary caregivers, and establishing an award program for excellence in mentoring women.

Her determination to do big things is captured in a comment she made after being named Dana-Farber's President: "If you don't aim high, you're never going to make major discoveries." As Dr. Glimcher has demonstrated, that passion can have as powerful an impact in the laboratory as in the culture of science and medicine itself.

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Figure 1. Laurie H. Glimcher, winner of the 2017 Association of American Physicians George M. Kober Medal. Image credit: Alexey Levchenko.