Linney Honored At Tower Cancer’s 20th Anniversary Gala

More than 700 people gathered last month at the Beverly Hilton for Beverly Hills-based Tower Cancer Research Foundation’s (TCRF) 20th anniversary Tower of Hope Gala celebration. Three-time Academy Award-nominated actress Laura Linney; cancer survivor, producer and actress Christina Simpkins, and oncologist Dr. Fred Rosenfelt were honored for raising awareness about cancer.

Honorees were joined by leaders in entertainment, politics, business and medicine, including Valerie Harper and Jim Burke, Oscar-nominated producer (The Descendants), president of production at Focus Features and a partner at Ad Hominem Enterprises, a production company he shares with Alexander Payne and Jim Taylor.

Burke presented Linney with Tower’s Humanity Award.

Linney, who was feted for her work on the Showtime series The Big C, both as a series executive producer and for her portrayal as the series’ central character, became aware of the devastating effects of cancer growing up in New York City, two blocks from Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital, where her mother was a private-duty nurse.

Her own father was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer and died within six weeks during her show’s second season.

“The lifespan of cancer has exceeded its welcome in my book,” said Linney. “I am tired of losing the people I love and hearing people say ‘you know she died of what her granddaddy had,’ or ‘all the men in his family go the same way.’”

The evening raised nearly $1.2 million for Tower, a donor-directed, specialized cancer-research foundation focused on funding Southern California initiatives with a global impact. Tower provides grants for research, patient support and community education to promote more effective treatments for cancer.

Five grants were awarded at the event—two for $500,000 each, and three Career Development Grants for $100,000 each.

Tower celebrated two decades of cancer-focused work, including participation in more than 200 clinical trials with thousands of patients and awards of more than $2 million to 32 physician scientists pursuing novel hypotheses.

The physician scientists who have received Tower’s Career Development Grants often demonstrate such promising results that they later obtain large grants from other foundations and cancer research centers. Tower’s initial $2 million investment has led to $35 million in additional clinical research funding.