

Congratulations to the 2023 Women's Venture Competition Top Winners!

First Prize
with Distinction
MARCH
BIOSCIENCES



Sarah Hein, Ph.D.
CEO & Co-Founder,
March Biosciences



Lily Zou, Ph.D., MBA
Co-founder & CEO,
Degron Therapeutics

Second Prize
DEGRON
THERAPEUTICS

October 16, 2023

Press Release

The AIM-HI Accelerator Fund Recognizes, Honors, and Congratulates Its 2023 Women's Venture Competition Top Winners

ROCKVILLE, MD – [AIM-HI Accelerator Fund](#) is pleased to announce that the winners of the 2023 Women's Venture Competition are March Biosciences and its CEO, Sarah Hein, Ph.D., as the First Prize with Distinction and Degron Therapeutics and its Co-founder and CEO, Lily Zou, Ph.D., MBA as the Second Prize. Blue-ribbon judge committee members selected them from a pool of 71 female-led, early-stage oncology companies across 15 countries. The Winners will be recognized at a Luncheon Award Ceremony with certificates and honorariums during the *2023 Global Summit and Award Ceremonies for Cancer Research & Entrepreneurship*, co-hosted by AIM-HI and the National Foundation for Cancer Research on October 21, 2023, at the National Press Club in Washington, DC.

[March Biosciences](#) has developed the MB-105 T-cell therapy for T-cell lymphoma (TCL) and T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia (T-ALL), indications with few treatment options and an exceptionally poor prognosis which leave patients little room for hope. The Phase 1 clinical trial has demonstrated strong efficacy and safety signals, with multiple long-term survivors in remission years after treatment.

"I am truly humbled to accept this prestigious award on behalf of March Biosciences. The journey has been one of passion, perseverance, and collaboration building off the breakthrough innovations from leading scientists at Baylor College of Medicine. This recognition from AIM-HI is an acknowledgment of our hard work and an affirmation of our technology platform," said Dr. Hein. "Thank you for this incredible honor, and together, we will continue to push the boundaries of what's possible in the fight against cancer."

[Degron Therapeutics](#) has designed and synthesized a unique molecular glue degrader (MGD) compound library known as the GlueXplorer platform. It uses its platform in combination with phenotypic screening, proteomic screening, and AI to accelerate the development of novel drugs for previously undruggable targets in oncology. Its lead program, a first-in-class MGD of an "undruggable" RNA binding protein which regulates critical cancer survival pathways, will enter clinical trials for multiple oncology indications with high unmet need.

In addition to the first and second-place winners, [Delee](#) was selected as The 2023 People's Choice for "Best Pitch" by a public audience voting for their favorite pitch presentation during the 2023 Women's Venture Competition selection process. Led by 26-year-old Liza Velarde, Co-founder and CEO, Delee has developed a circulating tumor cell (CTC) detection technology (CytoCatch™) involving a simple blood test and lab-on-a-chip technology for early cancer detection and monitoring of applied treatment effectiveness.

AIM-HI launched the Women's Venture Competition in 2020 to empower women scientist-entrepreneurs who are underfunded and underserved in the life science industry and create a sustaining impact for cancer patients through their worldwide ventures. AIM-HI harnesses the collective efforts of donors, visionary scientists, and entrepreneurs through its venture philanthropy approach to advance the development of promising discoveries to breakthrough therapies for patients.

"In an environment where numerous medical breakthroughs and transformative technologies struggle to progress into viable treatments due to limited funding for early-stage enterprises often deemed too risky for conventional venture capital or biopharmaceutical firms, the hurdles are even greater for women-led ventures," said **Sujan Ba, Ph.D., Co-founder and CEO of AIM-HI**. "The Women's Venture Competition's goal of bolstering women-led startups at the forefront of life-saving innovations through strategic partnerships and empowering these enterprises with access to our global network of influential thought leaders is what drives AIM-HI to recognize and award these women-led oncology startups to continue their vital work in our collective effort to beat cancer."

About the Women's Venture Competition

The Women's Venture Competition is a first-of-its-kind program that provides funding, coaching, and networking opportunities to women-led oncology startups. Three committees (selection, judging, and investment), whose members are world-class key opinion leaders, life sciences industry experts, investors, and entrepreneurs, provided assessments and recommendations for recognizing the Women's Venture Competition winners based on scientific and clinical merits and business impact for cancer patients. These winners are qualified to go into further due diligence for investment from the AIM-HI Accelerator Fund and its co-investors, contingent upon mutual agreement on investment terms.

The 2023 committees are comprised of the following persons (listed in alphabetical order):

- Anna D. Barker, Ph.D., Chief Strategy Officers, Lawrence J. Ellison Institute for Transformative Medicine
- Webster K. Cavenee, Ph.D., Director of Strategic Alliances, Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research
- Yijing (Jane) Chen, Ph.D., Associate, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati
- Aleksandra Filipovic, M.D., Ph.D., Head of Oncology, PureTech Health
- Pamela Garzone, Ph.D., Chief Development Officers, Anixa Biosciences
- Dimitra Georganopoulou, Ph.D., Innovation Faculty, MIT linQ CATALYST and General Partner of Qral Ventures
- Raju Kucherlapati, Ph.D., Paul C. Cabot Professor of Genetics and Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School

- Brian Leyland-Jones, M.B., B.S., Ph.D., Chief Medical Officer, National Foundation for Cancer Research
- Scott Lippman, M.D., Distinguished Professor of Medicine & Associate Vice Chancellor for Cancer Research, UC San Diego Health
- Beverly Lu, Ph.D., Investment Manager, Health, Emerson Collective
- Jimmy Lu, J.D., MBA, Co-Founder and Managing Director, Eos BioInnovation
- Eva Martin, M.D., Senior Director, Alliance and Asset Management, Roche Pharma Partnering
- Tom Miller, Founder and Managing Partner, GreyBird Ventures
- Gregory W. Mitchell, Ph.D., J.D., Of Counsel, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati
- Kornelia Polyak, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Medicine, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
- Fei Shen, Ph.D., Managing Director, Boehringer Ingelheim Venture Fund USA
- Suzanne Topalian, M.D., Associate Director, Bloomberg-Kimmel Institute for Cancer Immunotherapy, Johns Hopkins University
- Kevin Tylock, Ph.D., J.D., Associate, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati

About the AIM-HI Accelerator Fund

The AIM-HI Accelerator Fund (AIM-HI) is an independent 501(C)(3) non-profit organization created in 2019 by the National Foundation for Cancer Research to provide oncology startups with the resources they need to drive innovative discoveries forward, out of the lab, to the clinics, and eventually to the people battling cancer. Our non-profit changes the paradigm of funding biotech startups, utilizing charitable giving to make impact investments. Our mission is to bridge the gap between research breakthroughs and clinical trials, aiming to develop innovative cancer therapies and technologies that can save patients' lives. For more information, visit <https://aim-hiaccelerator.org/>.

About the National Foundation for Cancer Research

The National Foundation for Cancer Research (NFCR) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides scientists in the lab the funding they need to make breakthrough discoveries in cancer treatments, detection, prevention, and, ultimately, a cure for all cancer. NFCR has distinguished itself in the cancer research sector by emphasizing long-term, transformative research often overlooked by other major scientific funding sources. With the help of more than 5.3 million individual donors over the last 50 years, NFCR has provided \$410 million in funding to cancer research, prevention, and public education, which has led to many significant and life-saving discoveries that benefit patients today. For more information, visit <http://www.nfcr.org>.

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AIM-HI Accelerator Fund

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