LAW FIRMS JOIN FORCES TO FIGHT DEADLY CHILDHOOD CANCER

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Nineteen law firms will participate in Dress Down to Defeat DIPG™ to raise funds for research in the fight against DIPG (diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma), a tumor located in the brainstem. DIPG is the deadliest pediatric cancer with a median survival from diagnosis of 9 months and a near 0% survival overall.

Participating law firms will designate dates in June when employees may “dress down” in jeans or other casual clothing, in exchange for making a donation to support Michael Mosier Defeat DIPG Foundation, a nonprofit organization committed to raising funds for DIPG research. By joining together in this giving campaign, event participants are helping to shine a spotlight on this particularly cruel childhood cancer while also making a meaningful contribution towards promising new research.

Participating law firms in this event, as of May 18, 2016, include: Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, Arnold & Porter LLP, Covington & Burling LLP, DLA Piper (Baltimore), Hogan Lovells, Jenner & Block, King & Spalding LLP, Kirkland & Ellis LLP, K&L Gates LLP, Latham & Watkins LLP, Mayer Brown LLP, O'Melveny & Myers LLP (DC and New York), Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, Paul Hastings LLP, Sidley Austin LLP, Steptoe & Johnson LLP, White & Case, Williams & Connolly LLP, and Zuckerman Spaeder LLP. Participating offices are in Washington, DC, unless otherwise indicated.

The effort to unify law firms in support of this cause came from personal tragedy. On September 4, 2014, Jenny and Mark Mosier, both Washington, D.C., attorneys, learned the devastating news that their six-year-old son, Michael, was diagnosed with DIPG. Their world shattered as doctors informed them that there was no effective treatment. In just a matter of weeks, Michael, a healthy, energetic six-year-old boy went from playing sports and boarding
the bus for his first day of kindergarten to needing a wheelchair and losing the ability to control the left (and dominant) side of his body. Unfortunately, after a courageous eight-and-a-half month battle, Michael passed away on May 17, 2015.

Mark and Jenny both have ties to Covington & Burling LLP, where Mark is a partner in the appellate practice. He clerked for Supreme Court Justices Rehnquist and Roberts. Jenny was a litigation associate at Covington before joining the Department of Justice and serving as Deputy Chief of Staff to Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr.

DIPG typically strikes children between ages four and eleven. Because of its location in the brainstem where all motor activity is controlled, DIPG is inoperable. The disease progresses by taking over a child’s motor functions one-by-one, typically starting with vision and balance problems, before moving to partial paralysis, followed by the inability to chew, speak, swallow, move and eventually breathe – all of this while the child remains mentally intact.

DIPG has gained more attention through coverage of a young woman named Lauren Hill, who was a vocal advocate who raised over $1 million dollars for DIPG research before passing away in April 2015. Her courage was recognized by many news outlets, and she was honored at the 2015 ESPY awards for Best Moment in connection with fulfilling her lifelong dream of playing college basketball, despite her terminal diagnosis.

For decades, treatment for DIPG has remained the same and has been ineffective. Nearly all funding for DIPG research comes from charitable foundations, which are typically run by families who have suffered the ultimate loss of their child. The entire amount spent annually on DIPG research – approximately $3 – 5 million – is less than 0.0005% of the total funding for cancer research. In just the past few years, due to better medical technology and increased access to tumor tissue, researchers have made real advances in their understanding of this disease. There is finally hope for progress in finding a cure.

Michael Mosier Defeat DIPG Foundation dedicates its efforts to promoting awareness and finding treatments and a cure for DIPG through funding of medical research, including through its membership in the DIPG Collaborative.

Visit www.defeatdipg.org for more information. Michael Mosier Defeat DIPG Foundation is also on Facebook (www.facebook.com/defeatdipg) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/defeatdipg).

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