



Elizabeth H. Blackburn, Ph.D.
SU2C Scientific Advisory Committee



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Elizabeth H. Blackburn, Ph.D. is the Morris Herzstein Professor Emerita in the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics at the University of California, San Francisco and President Emerita of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies. Blackburn earned a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science at the University of Melbourne, Australia, and earned her Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge in England. She went on to do her postdoctoral study in molecular and cellular biology at Yale University, and in 1978 joined the faculty of the University of California, Berkeley in the Department of Molecular Biology. In 1990, she moved to the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), where she served as Department Chair from 1993 to 1999.

For the majority of her career, Blackburn has been investigating the structure and roles of telomeres. Her pioneering and innovative research has included the development of an anti-cancer therapy that forces cells with active telomerase to make errors during telomere synthesis, effectively triggering cellular suicide. More recently, she has been applying her insights into telomere biology toward understanding the life experiences and social influences that affect human telomeres and associated disease risks, including cancer risks and progression. One goal is to modulate telomere biology in healthy and at-risk people to reduce such risks.

Throughout her career, Blackburn has been recognized with many prestigious awards, including the 2009 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, the Lasker Award, AACR-Pezcoller Foundation International Award for Cancer Research, General Motors Cancer Research Foundation Alfred P. Sloan Award, AACR-G.H.A. Clowes Memorial Award, American Cancer Society Medal of Honor, 26th Annual Bristol-Myers Squibb Award for Distinguished Achievement in Cancer Research, Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research, the Eli Lilly Research Award for Microbiology and Immunology, and more. She was named California Scientist of the Year in 1999, and one of TIME Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in 2007. She served as the 1998 President of the American Society for Cell Biology, and the 2010-11 President of the American Association for Cancer Research. Blackburn is an elected Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Medicine, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Royal

Society of London, the American Academy of Microbiology, the American Philosophical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.