

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

X



Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

[Make an Appointment](#)
[Back](#)

[Press Releases](#)
[About MSK](#)
[Cancer Treatment](#)
[Learn About Cancer & Treatment](#)

ABOUT US

[Our mission, vision & core values](#)

[Leadership](#)

[History](#)

[Inclusion & belonging](#)

[Annual report](#)

[Give to MSK](#)

FOR THE MEDIA

The Iris Cantor Chair will be endowed in perpetuity in honor of Sidney J. Winawer, MD, former Chief of the Gastroenterology and Nutrition Service at Memorial Sloan Kettering and an internationally recognized leader in the prevention of digestive cancers. Dr. Winawer is credited with establishing national guidelines for colorectal screening in the United States. The chair will be held by a distinguished translational researcher with a proven track record of bringing discoveries from the laboratory to the treatment of patients.

Studies undertaken by the researcher named to the Iris Cantor Chair will pave the way for new progress in the fight against digestive cancers, which affect the esophagus, stomach, colon, rectum, liver, and pancreas. According to the International Digestive Cancer Alliance (IDCA), digestive cancers constitute the most common cancers worldwide and are the leading cause of cancer death, but can be addressed effectively through prevention or early detection and treatment.

Douglas A. Warner III, Chairman of Memorial Sloan Kettering's Boards of Overseers and Managers, expressed gratitude to Mrs. Cantor on behalf of the Center community. "Mrs. Cantor and the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation have been consistently generous in their support of this institution's life-saving

mission,” Mr. Warner said “The creation of the Iris Cantor Chair is significant for the discoveries it will make possible, and as a meaningful tribute to a dedicated and accomplished physician.”

Sidney J. Winawer is a tenured member of Memorial Sloan Kettering’s Department of Medicine. Widely known as a pioneer in describing the developmental stages of [colorectal cancer](#) and promoting the benefits of cancer screening, he has published more than 400 research articles, reviews, and book chapters. Dr. Winawer’s research found that removal of premalignant polyps prevents colorectal cancer which led to the concept of screening colonoscopy.

Dr. Winawer is also the co-author of *Cancer Free and Healing Lessons*, which are written for the general public, as well as the co-chair of the IDCA and past president of The American College of Gastroenterology.

“I am deeply touched by Iris Cantor’s thoughtfulness,” said Dr. Winawer. “But even more, I value her gift for the encouragement and hope it offers people around the world whose lives will be changed for the better by the work undertaken here.”

Iris Cantor is the chairman and president of the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation, which she and her late husband established in 1978. Over the years, the Foundation has emerged as a major supporter of initiatives in women’s health care, medicine, education, and the arts, with particular emphasis on institutions in California and New York.

Mrs. Cantor divides her time among homes in Palm Beach, New York, and Southern California. She is a prominent collector of works by the great French sculptor, Auguste Rodin, and she and the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation have sponsored exhibitions of his work around the country.

Discussing her most recent gift, Mrs. Cantor said, “I have long been impressed by the compassion and expertise that Memorial Sloan Kettering’s physicians bring to their work. Dr. Winawer and his colleagues are an inspiration to us all, and the Foundation is delighted to endow this chair as our way of encouraging future progress in understanding and treating digestive cancers.”

© 2026 Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center