

Justin Minsang Kim Scholarship Progress Report

Dear SNUCMAA Leadership Team,

I am deeply grateful for the generous support of the Seoul National University College of Medicine Alumni Association of North America (SNUCMAA-NA) and the late Dr. Chull Hi Lee's legacy. This scholarship has been instrumental in enabling me to pursue meaningful research and service initiatives that align with my passion for oncology, patient advocacy, and systemic reform in end-of-life care.

Since receiving the scholarship, I have joined the lab of a world-renown cancer scientist Dr. Sendurai Mani, who is the Dean's Chair for Translational Oncology at the Legoretta Cancer Center of Brown University. My research focuses on cancer stem cells, with a particular emphasis on using single-cell multiomic analyses to better understand tumor progression and metastasis. The scholarship support has allowed me to dedicate time and resources to this critical work, facilitating my involvement in cutting-edge computational techniques and laboratory research that aim to improve cancer diagnostics and therapeutics. Through this experience, I have gained a deeper understanding of the complexities of cancer biology and the potential for translational research to directly impact patient outcomes.

In addition to my research, I founded 'Rest With Dignity', a student-led initiative that addresses financial and systemic barriers to end-of-life care. This project emerged from a recognition of the hardships that families face when navigating post-bereavement logistics, particularly the financial burden of funeral expenses. Our mission is fourfold: (1) to support families struggling with funeral costs and logistical burdens, (2) to educate future physicians about the economic and bureaucratic realities of post-bereavement care, (3) to advocate for systemic improvements that ensure equitable access to end-of-life resources, and (4) to work toward policy change that creates sustainable funding programs for funeral assistance. Through direct service, mentorship, and curriculum integration, we aim to empower medical students with the knowledge and tools to advocate for patients and families during one of the most vulnerable moments of their lives.

The scholarship has played a crucial role in enabling me to develop this initiative by covering expenses related to outreach, educational programming, and advocacy efforts. It has also provided me with the flexibility to engage in leadership development opportunities that will enhance my ability to effect change in both research and patient care. Looking to the future, I am committed to a career that integrates scientific discovery with patient advocacy. As a future physician-scientist, I aspire to continue advancing oncology research while also working to dismantle systemic inequities in healthcare. My experiences thus far have reinforced the importance of combining research with advocacy, ensuring that discoveries in the lab translate into tangible benefits for patients, particularly those from underserved communities. Furthermore, I envision expanding Rest With Dignity into a national initiative that not only supports bereaved families financially but also trains medical students across institutions to be leaders in end-of-life care reform. By fostering collaborations with policymakers, hospital systems, and community

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organizations, I hope to contribute to a future where all patients and their families receive the dignity and support they deserve at the end of life. None of this would have been possible without the support of this scholarship. I remain profoundly appreciative of this opportunity and am eager to continue honoring Dr. Chull Hi Lee's legacy through my work in research, advocacy, and compassionate patient care.

Always grateful for your support in my journey!



Best,
Justin Minsang Kim