Alumni Achievement Award

Charles W. M. Roberts, MD/PhD ’95

Charles W. M. Roberts, MD/PhD ’95, is director of the Comprehensive Cancer Center and Executive Vice President at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis. An international expert in cancer epigenetics and a dedicated pediatric oncologist, the medical community regards him as an accomplished leader, well-liked by all, who moves seamlessly from the lab to the clinic.

Roberts launched into research as a medical student, joining the laboratory of the late Stanley J. Korsmeyer, MD, to investigate genetic mechanisms in cancer formation. After earning his medical and doctoral degrees from Washington University in 1995, he went to Boston Children’s Hospital for internship and residency. There, Roberts set his investigative sights on SWI/SNF, a protein complex that regulates DNA transcription. Roberts’s research confirmed SNF5 as a bona fide tumor suppressor, and for more than two decades, from mouse models to clinical trials, his research has continued to pursue insights that are being translated into treatment targets for related cancers.

After completing his fellowship at Boston Children’s Hospital in 2003, Roberts joined the faculty of Harvard Medical School and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. In 2004, he received the institute’s Stephen E. Sallan Leadership Award, which recognizes pediatric oncology staff leaders for their ability to guide, inspire and motivate others. He also led the institutional review board and was co-director of the Solid Tumor Program before being named Deputy Chief Scientific Officer of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. In 2015, he was named executive vice president and director of the St. Jude Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Roberts has been elected to the Society for Pediatric Research, the American Pediatric Society, and the American Society of Clinical Investigation. He has also been selected to co-chair several national meetings and conferences.

More than an outstanding scientist and leader, Roberts is recognized by his colleagues as a top-notch clinician who draws rave reviews from service chiefs, trainees and nurses alike. In all of his pursuits, from bench to bedside to boardroom, his ultimate goal is to improve outcomes for children who have cancer.

The Washington University Medical Center Alumni Association is pleased to present its Alumni Achievement Award to Dr. Roberts.