

# HEALTHY LIVING

## Canada's first organization dedicated solely to lung cancer aims to raise the profile of the disease

(NC)—This summer, the first organization dedicated solely to lung cancer, the Alliance for Lung Cancer Awareness, Support and Education (ALCASE Canada), announced its inception in Canada.

As a new charitable organization, ALCASE Canada, made up of health care professionals, private citizens and family members whose lives have been affected by lung cancer, was established to

increase awareness about lung cancer, fill the void that currently exists in support for people living with lung cancer and individuals who care for them, and to educate the public about the disease. As part of the launch, ALCASE Canada also unveiled its new website, [www.alcasetcanada.ca](http://www.alcasetcanada.ca), which provides information regarding support groups, resources, treatments and smoking cessation, helping patients and families cope with this illness.

"When I lost my wife to lung cancer three years ago, it sparked in me a passion and determination to help others who are dealing with this terrible disease and to bring lung cancer to the attention of the Canadian public," explained Ralph Gouda, ALCASE Canada founder and president. "The result of my resolve is the Alliance for Lung Cancer Awareness, Support and Education."

Lung cancer, the leading cancer killer in the country, exacts a devastating toll on Canadians. This year in Canada, more than 21,200 people will be diagnosed with lung cancer — 75 to 85 per cent of these with advanced disease i — and 18,800 will die. ii The death rate for lung cancer in Canada is more than breast, prostate and colorectal cancers combined iii — yet the disease remains poorly understood and there is a severe lack of resources and support for people living with the disease.

"I was devastated when I found out I had lung cancer, especially since I had just lost my best friend to the disease," explained lung cancer patient Gail Tondino. "Added to my disbelief was the terrible knowledge that very few people survive the disease. ALCASE Canada gives me hope that things will improve for people with lung cancer and now we will finally have access to the kind of networks and support that have been so helpful in improving the lives of people with other diseases," she added.

Thus far, ALCASE Canada has been instrumental in developing one of the first lung cancer support groups in Canada and has planned and implemented two very successful lung cancer awareness campaigns. In 2003, ALCASE is planning to introduce a peer support program, where lung cancer patients and their caregivers from anywhere in Canada can connect with trained, knowledgeable peers for private and confidential discussions about their circumstances and concerns. In addition, ALCASE Canada is planning a variety of awareness and educational activities, such as a clear ribbon campaign and seminar series in November to mark Lung Cancer Awareness Month.

"Unfortunately, for people diagnosed with lung cancer, treatment is limited and support is minimal. People who have been touched by lung cancer call it the 'invisible killer' because it receives such little public attention and little funding when com-

pared to research dollars spent on other types of cancer," explained Magdalene Winterhoff, oncology social worker and member of the ALCASE Canada board of directors. "This is why we are so excited about the advent of ALCASE in Canada. People living with lung cancer have long needed an organization, a voice, dedicated solely to their cause," added Ms. Winterhoff.

One in 18 women, and one in 11 men will develop lung cancer during their lifetimes.

"Lung cancer can strike anyone, even non-smokers," stated Dr. Yee Ung, Radiation Oncologist, Toronto-Sunnybrook Regional Cancer Centre and Board of Directors, ALCASE Canada. "Since 1988, lung cancer incidence rates have risen by 30 per cent and death rates have increased by 46 per cent among Canadian women, despite the fact that smoking rates have actually gone down. This should underscore that we have a serious health problem in this country that urgently needs to be addressed. There is urgent need for increased funding to conduct more research into the disease and for better treatments — many of the current treatments, including chemotherapy and radiation often have debilitating side effects for patients," added Dr Ung. "ALCASE Canada is going to help bring the plight of our lung cancer patients to the forefront."

"Everyone is entitled to the best medical treatment and access to resources, helping to promote the best care and treatment outcomes. ALCASE is dedicated to ensuring that a continuum of support services are given the priority that is warranted for Canada's number one cancer killer," concluded Ms. Winterhoff.

## How You Can Help

ALCASE Canada welcomes volunteer support from patients, caregivers, health care professionals, students or anyone who has time and wishes to help. For more information about volunteer opportunities, please contact Holly Bradley, Executive Director at 416-785-3439, email ALCASE Canada at [alcasetcanada@bellnet.ca](mailto:alcasetcanada@bellnet.ca) or visit the website at [www.alcasetcanada.ca](http://www.alcasetcanada.ca).

i Simon GR and Bunn PA. Taxanes in the treatment of advanced (stage III and IV) NSCLC: Recent developments. *Cancer Invest* 2003; 21(1): 87-104.

ii Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian Cancer Statistics 2003

iii Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian Cancer Statistics 2003



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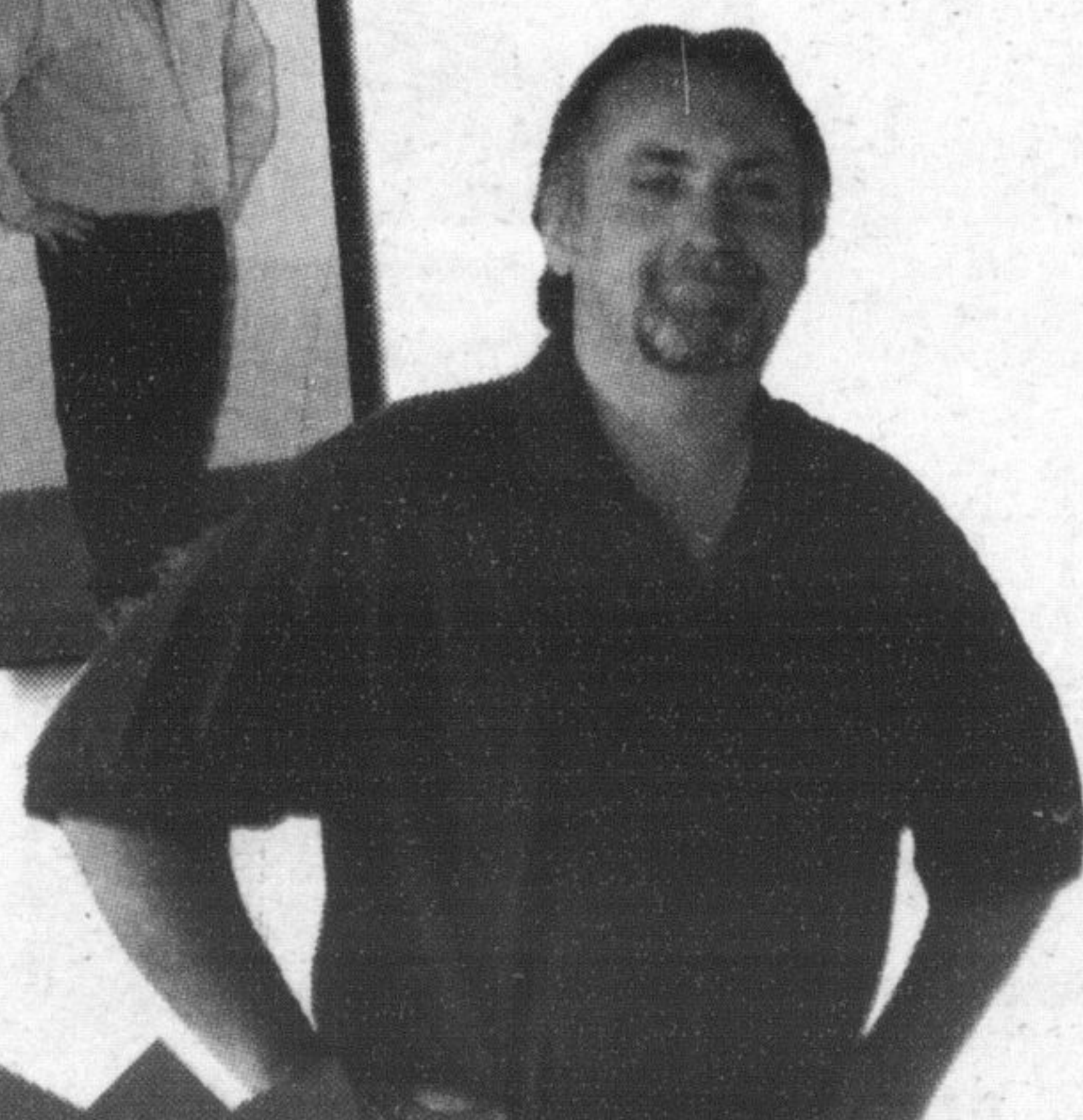
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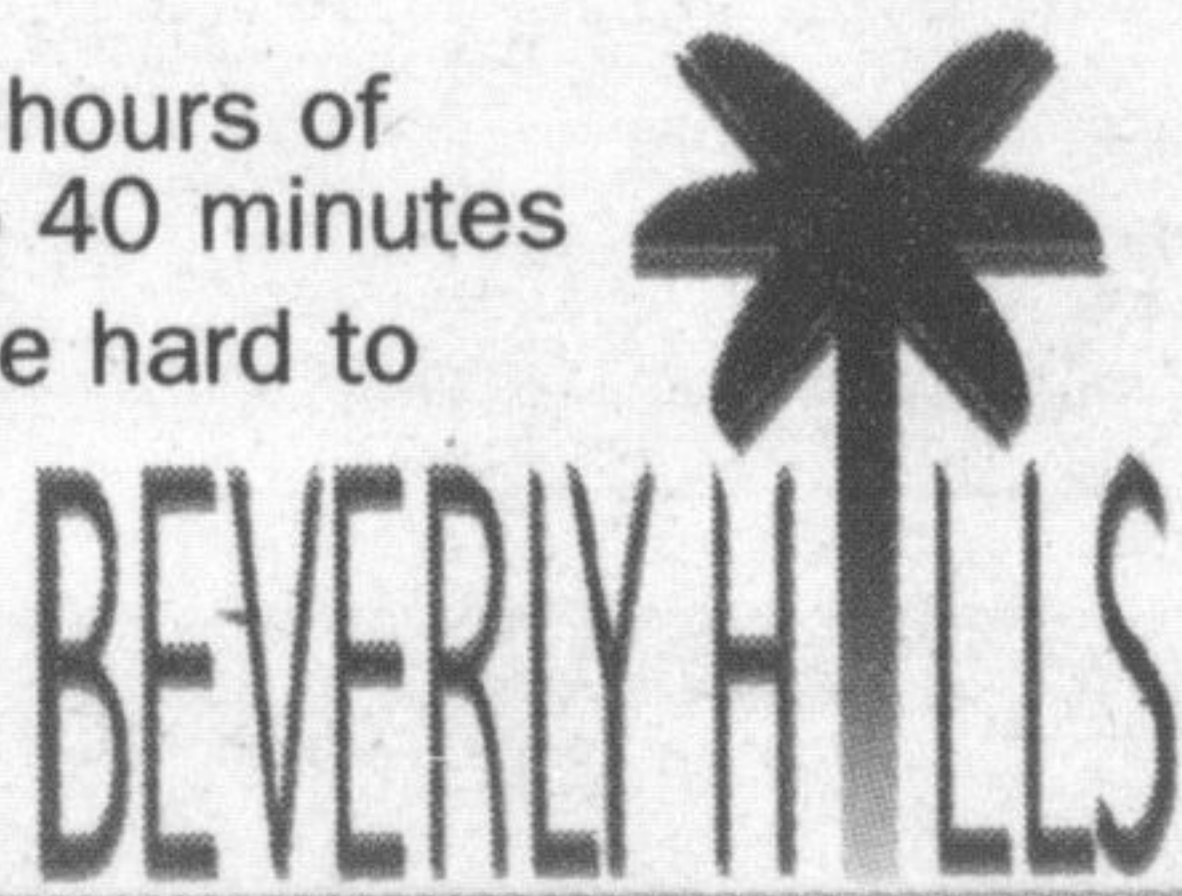
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