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Tenth Annual Award of Hope Gala Raises Money and Awareness

*Event Honors Melanoma Advocate Mary R. Lasser
Eve Ensler Performs*

New Brunswick, N.J., September 28, 2005 –The Cancer Institute of New Jersey’s (CINJ) Tenth Annual Award of Hope Gala and Benefit Auction was held Saturday, September 17, 2005 at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. The Gala is CINJ’s single largest annual fundraiser. This year’s event not only raised more than \$700,000 for CINJ, it also raised awareness for melanoma, the fastest growing cancer in the United States.

Mary Lasser, mother of Thomas A. Lasser who lost his battle with melanoma in 1999 at the age of 43, was honored with this year’s *Award of Hope* for her commitment to the eradication of melanoma. After she lost her son to the disease, Mary Lasser made it her mission to create the Thomas A. Lasser Foundation, which now supports the melanoma research of Dr. Joseph Germino, CINJ physician and researcher. The Award of Hope, CINJ’s highest honor, was established in 1997 to publicly recognize corporations, foundations and individuals who make extraordinary contributions to the healthcare of New Jersey citizens.

“Melanoma is one of the leading causes of cancer death in the country, and I am grateful to be honored by CINJ and to help support Drs. Goydos and Germino in their work to eradicate this disease,” said Mary Lasser.

James Goydos, M.D., and Joseph Germino, M.D., Ph.D., Co-directors of the Melanoma and Soft Tissue Program at CINJ, received the *Leadership in Patient Care Award*. These outstanding physicians were recognized for their dedication in providing exceptional patient care and treatment and devotion to representing CINJ in the community. The *Leadership in Patient Care Award* was established in 2000 to acknowledge the health care professionals whose life and work exemplify the spirit and mission of CINJ.

“We are pleased to present Mary Lasser and the Thomas A. Lasser Foundation with the *Award of Hope* and Drs. Goydos and Germino with the *Leadership in Patient*

Care Award. The dedication of each of these individuals to the fight against cancer has helped CINJ reach milestones in cancer research, treatment, education, and prevention,” said William N. Hait, M.D., Ph.D., Director of CINJ, and Associate Dean of Oncology Programs and Professor of Medicine and Pharmacology, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

This year, award-winning playwright Eve Ensler performed excerpts from her new play, *The Good Body*. She also spoke of her work with V-Day, a global movement she founded to end violence against women and girls.

To learn more about all opportunities to support CINJ, please call 732/235-8614.

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is the state’s first and only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, and is dedicated to improving the prevention, detection, treatment and care of patients with cancer. CINJ’s physician-scientists engage in translational research, transforming their laboratory discoveries into clinical practice—quite literally bringing research to life. The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is a Center of Excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Network is comprised of hospitals throughout the state and provides a mechanism to rapidly disseminate important discoveries into the community. CINJ Partner Hospitals: Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, Atlantic Health System (Morristown Memorial Hospital, Mountainside Hospital, Overlook Hospital). CINJ Affiliates: Bayshore Community Hospital, CentraState Healthcare System, Cooper University Hospital (CINJ at Cooper)*, Jersey Shore University Medical Center, JFK Medical Center, Monmouth Medical Center, Raritan Bay Medical Center, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton (CINJ at Hamilton), Saint Peter’s University Hospital, Somerset Medical Center, Southern Ocean County Hospital, The University Hospital/UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School*, University Medical Center at Princeton

* Academic Affiliate

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Editor’s note: Photos from CINJ’s Tenth Annual Award of Hope Gala and Benefit Auction are available upon request.