

For Immediate Release

**FORMER 'INVENTOR OF THE YEAR' LAUNCHES IP ADVOCATE,
NON-PROFIT DEDICATED TO HELPING ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS
PROTECT THEIR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

*Warning of ' Hazards along the Path between Invention and
Commercialization', Dr. Renee Kaswan Forms IP Advocate to Seek
System That Protects the Interests of All Essential Parties*

ATLANTA (Oct. 15, 2008) – Creating the resource she wished had existed when she was forced to sign away the rights to her own invention, former University of Georgia “Inventor of the Year” Dr. Renee Kaswan today announced the launch of a new non-profit organization, IPAdvocate.org.

IP Advocate is dedicated to bringing integrity and transparency to university technology transfer and intellectual property policies, processes and procedures. The organization will inform and equip academic inventors to face the challenges of technology transfer and the commercialization of their life’s work.

“The satisfaction of achievement can rapidly evolve into frustration when researchers are forced to spend their limited time and money fighting for the rights to their own inventions,” said Dr. Kaswan, inventor of the billion-dollar drug Restasis® and a former research professor at the University of Georgia. “They’re forced to navigate arenas outside of their core focus and competency – areas like law and business. We want to alert research scientists to the hazards that lie along the path between invention and commercialization, and prevent these perils from stifling the conveyance of the products of academic discovery and innovation to the ultimate beneficiary, the public.”

IP Advocate’s mission is as follows:

- To serve as a repository of intellectual property best practices;

- To promote ethical commercialization of innovations on behalf of the public welfare;
- To encourage mutually beneficial relationships between institutions of higher learning and their researchers;
- To cultivate innovation in American universities as a valuable national resource;
- To host a forum for open dialogue and information exchange among faculty, students, researchers and other interested parties.

“The public has an enormous stake in keeping the energy and intellect of academic scientists focused on what they do best - solving the world's problems through research,” said Dr. Kaswan. “Science is a human resource, not a zero sum game. And, as scientists, we share information, we rely upon one another and we trust the university policies and contracts that govern us. We cannot be productive while we are distracted by worry that this trust is misplaced.”

In the case of Dr. Kaswan, contractual technicalities were used to strip away her equity in her life’s work. Actions by the University of Georgia Research Foundation (UGARF), which governs the university’s patent licensing, led to a licensing deal for Restasis that cost the university, the inventor and Georgia taxpayers at least \$220 million.

“If my experience was an isolated case, it would matter only to me,” Dr. Kaswan said. “However, the ugly secret about university technology transfer is that, as it says in the book *Science for Sale*, all big winners end up in court. And that can only end up stifling, rather than promoting, innovation.”

Dr. Kaswan has uncovered a number of other cases in which academics or institutions were cheated out of royalty revenues due to inadequate policies, procedures and laws that should protect the interests of all parties. She plans to feature their stories on an interactive website, along with examples of what can be accomplished when a university chooses ethics over profits.

“What is lacking is a system that protects the interests of all the essential parties, including the inventors, universities and their administrations, corporate licensees, and

the public,” said Dr. Kaswan. “The public funds universities through their taxes and rightfully should benefit from scientific advances.”

About IP Advocate

IP Advocate (www.IPAdvocate.org) is a non-profit organization that educates and empowers faculty researchers on patent rights and the process of commercialization – helping inventors protect their rights during the complex process of getting their invention from the lab to the people who need it. Founded by Dr. Renee Kaswan, inventor of the billion-dollar drug Restasis® and a former research professor at the University of Georgia, IP Advocate is a rich resource of information and best practices related to the commercialization of intellectual property. IP Advocate is a 501(c)(3) organization, and is based in Atlanta.

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