

For Immediate Release

IP Advocate Founder Dr. Renee Kaswan to Take Aim at
Commercialization Barriers Faced by University Faculty Inventors
at 2009 Technology Transfer Society Conference,

*Noted Scientist Urges More Flexibility in Technology Transfer, Chides
University Offices for Bottlenecks, Compulsory Assignment of IP*

ATLANTA (Sept. 29, 2009) – Speaking of the then-divided Berlin, former President Reagan famously admonished Soviet leader Gorbachev to “tear down this wall.” In a similar spirit, IP Advocate founder Dr. Renee Kaswan is calling on the university technology transfer system to remove the barriers that keep innovations from moving swiftly into the marketplace.

IP Advocate (www.IPAdvocate.org) today announced that Dr. Kaswan has been invited to speak at the 2009 Technology Transfer Society (T2S) Annual Conference, to discuss the dilemma that faculty inventors face in the process of commercializing their inventions.

Dr. Kaswan joins speakers from Harvard Business School, Stanford, MIT, Duke, NASA and other global institutions to discuss the latest issues concerning university technology transfer and the social consequences of entrepreneurial activity.

The [conference](#), titled “The Entrepreneurial Enterprise,” will be held October 2 at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. Dr. Kaswan is participating in the *Issues in Technology Transfer* roundtable session.

“It’s important to include the inventor’s perspective when examining how to improve the university technology transfer system – and I’m honored to give that unique perspective a voice, among such prestigious colleagues,” said Dr. Kaswan. “What our nation needs is an efficient way to move an idea from an inventor’s mind to

an entrepreneur's office to a consumer's bedside table as quickly as possible. But our current system creates bottlenecks at that first stage, by essentially taking all inventions from an entire campus teeming with curious minds and forcing them through one – often very small – porthole. If inventors had the freedom to choose with whom to partner, the entire technology transfer program would benefit.”

Dr. Kaswan is inventor of the patent that the billion-dollar drug Restasis® is based on. She is the founder of Georgia Veterinary Specialists and a former University of Georgia (UGA) Veterinary Ophthalmology professor. Her patented treatment for chronic dry-eye remains the most profitable invention in UGA's history and has been hailed as one of the “University Innovations that Changed the World” by the University of Virginia Patent Foundation. Dr. Kaswan was recognized by the University of Georgia as its “Inventor of the Year” in 1998 and received UGA's Creative Research Medal in 1992.

But Dr. Kaswan's path to commercialization has not been a smooth one. The original licensing deal Dr. Kaswan structured for the University of Georgia with pharmaceutical giant Allergan for Restasis would have netted the university about \$300 million. But when the University of Georgia Research Foundation (UGARF) negotiated a secret new deal, without Dr. Kaswan's participation, it made a miscalculation that ultimately cost the university, its inventor and Georgia taxpayers at least \$220 million in royalties. Dr. Kaswan also contends that the pivotal response on the Invention Disclosure Form she filed with the university was changed without her knowledge – a change that the university relied upon to support its right to assignment, control and licensure of her patents to Allergan.

Wanting to help other researchers avoid the pitfalls she has faced on the path of commercialization, Dr. Kaswan created IP Advocate to help academic researchers preserve their rights in their work and to cultivate an online community that focuses on safeguarding the interests of faculty inventors.

Already one of the most comprehensive IP resources available, www.IPAdvocate.org provides a storehouse of authoritative information on laws and

litigation related to intellectual property issues, case studies that represent both cautionary tales and examples of successful collaboration, and an interactive forum where researchers and others can share information with each other and discuss laws, ethics, best practices, public policy on academic technology transfer and more.

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. IP Advocate is a rich resource of information and best practices related to the commercialization of intellectual property. The organization was founded by Dr. Renee Kaswan, inventor of the billion-dollar drug Restasis® and a former research professor at the University of Georgia; and is led by executive director Rhaz Zeisler, a recognized international interactive media brand strategist, and former Walt Disney producer and IBM creative executive. IP Advocate is a 501(c)(3) organization, based in Atlanta.

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