

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### INNAUGURAL JOHNS HOPKINS SCHOLAR AWARD ANNOUNCED Melanoma Foundation Supports Kimmel Cancer Center Researcher

Baltimore, MD – March 7, 2006 – The Joanna M. Nicolay Melanoma Foundation (JMNMF) and the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center announce the formation and inaugural presentation of the Joanna M. Nicolay Melanoma Foundation Research Scholar Award. Ms. Staci D. Cummings, currently a graduate student in the Pharmacology and Molecular Science Program at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, is the first recipient of this scholarship to advance melanoma research. Ms. Cummings is focusing her research on cancer biology, specifically a project that involves defining the role of certain proteins present in melanoma development. Melanoma is the most serious and lethal form of skin cancer responsible for 79% of all skin cancer deaths, but only receives about 10% of all funding provided to skin cancer research.

According to Dr. Rhoda Alani, Director for the Laboratory of Cutaneous Oncology for the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center, “This partnership with the Joanna M. Nicolay Melanoma Foundation, the first funding of its kind dedicated to scholarships for graduate student researchers, provides the Kimmel Cancer Center with greater research resources and cultivates relevant academic capacity in developing professionals in the field.”

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Dr. Alani, who is an Associate Professor of Oncology, Dermatology, Molecular Biology and Genetics and Director of the Laboratory of Cutaneous Oncology in the Kimmel Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, is currently working on assessing Id1 as a marker for early melanomas in conjunction with the efforts of collaborators at other institutions. Under Alani's oversight, members of the Laboratory of Cutaneous Oncology work diligently to develop novel therapies for melanoma based on ongoing studies in this renowned laboratory.

Robert E. Nicolay, JMNMF chair stated, "The JMNMF is extremely pleased to support the research efforts of the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center, a world-renowned organization at the forefront of this promising field. Supporting melanoma research is an integral part of the JMNMF mission and the synergy created through this new partnership will contribute to the progress of melanoma biology research - truly a successful step forward for both organizations."

Since its inception in 1973, the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins has been dedicated to better understanding human cancers and finding more effective treatments. One of only 39 cancer centers in the country designated by the [National Cancer Institute \(NCI\)](#) as a Comprehensive Cancer Center, the Kimmel Cancer Center has active programs in clinical research, laboratory research, education, community outreach, and prevention and control. The Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center is the only such NCI Comprehensive Cancer Center in the state of Maryland.

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Formed in 2004, the Joanna M. Nicolay Melanoma Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, public charity. The mission of the Joanna M. Nicolay Melanoma Foundation is to support medical research that will ultimately lead to a cure for melanoma; seek opportunities to educate the general public on prevention and the seriousness of melanoma; and be a resource for patients and the entire melanoma community.