**2013 JMNMF RSA Summary & Photo**

**Giuseppina Claps, Sanford-Burnham Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute**

*Pictured Left to Right: Ze'ev Ronai, PhD, Professor and Director, Sanford Burnham Medical Research; Giuseppina Claps, JMNMF RSA Recipient; and, Robert Rickert, PhD, Associate Dean, Sanford-Burnham Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.*

## The Role of ATF2 in B-Raf-Driven Melanoma

Melanoma represents one of the most lethal cutaneous malignancies, largely due to its metastatic propensity and ability to resist therapy. The limited effectiveness of general chemotherapy, immunotherapy or monotherapy, highlights the urgent need to identify proteins as new targets for innovative therapy. Thus, better understanding of mechanisms underlying melanoma development and resistance to therapy holds promise for development of novel therapeutic modalities. Our focus on Activating Transcription Factor2 (ATF2) - a downstream effector of pathways that are commonly deregulated in melanoma, offers one such opportunity. Work from our lab has demonstrated how ATF2 functions as an oncogene in melanoma, but also, how it may be possible to switch its activity back - so that it acts as a tumor suppressor, in which case it will inhibit melanoma. Our proposed studies employ powerful mouse melanoma models, which will allow us to genetically establish the importance of ATF2 for BRAF-mutant melanomas, with focus on development as well as response to current therapies.