

Galien Foundation – Global Community of Life Science Innovators Honors the Legacy of Late Biopharma Leader and Visionary Bernard Poussot

Poussot Championed the Prix Galien Award Efforts Recognizing Start-Up Health Innovation

NEW YORK, NY, May 10, 2024 -- The Galien Foundation global community of innovators in the life sciences mourns the passing of our esteemed colleague and Prix Galien Committee Chair, Bernard Poussot, who died May 1, 2024. For more than a decade, Poussot provided our diverse members in business, academia and the health professions with the strategic depth and expertise gained from his leadership in building great companies whose innovative medicines and vaccines have improved the lives of untold numbers of people worldwide. His life's work exemplified, as few can, the mandate set by Galien Foundation Honorary Founding President, Holocaust survivor, and Nobel Peace Laureate, the late Pr. Elie Wiesel: to improve the human condition by applying biopharmaceutical science in treating and curing disease.

For his work on behalf of science, technology and medicine, Poussot received in 2007 the Legion d'Honneur, the highest civilian award bestowed by his native country, France. He was also a Fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine. He served many years as a Board member of Germany's Max Planck Institute's Florida research unit, where he helped seed and launch clinical investigation programs in the neurosciences field.

After an early start in the French and European HQ operations of G.D. Searle Inc. and Merck & Co., to his 23-year pathway to the top ranks of the US biopharma industry as Chairman and CEO of Wyeth Pharmaceuticals Inc., and more recently as a senior Board member of Roche Holdings AG, Bernard brought a quiet and unrelenting passion to the often mundane – and always arduous – task of developing a new drug.

At Wyeth, he managed the company's precedent-setting strategic shift from small molecule to specialty biologic drugs – introducing what we now call the new era of precision medicine. Commenting on his former colleague, Galien committee member Dr. Mikael Dolsten, M.D., Ph.D.,

Chief Scientific Officer and President, Pfizer Research & Development said, “during our time together at Wyeth, Bernard was an exemplary leader who was deeply involved in the science at every step of the way. There would be a tremendous gap in what we've achieved in medicine, if not for the valiant efforts spearheaded by his leadership. Bernard was a generous mentor and dear friend, someone I will miss deeply and who, no doubt, inspired an entire generation of scientific visionaries.”

Other colleagues note how Poussot's familial roots in the geographically contested region of Lorraine in eastern France made for a unique business perspective at the time of being boundaryless. Prix Galien USA Awards Committee Chair, Former Dean of Tufts University School of Medicine and former Chief Medical Officer of Merck & Co., Dr. Michael Rosenblatt, said, “Bernard's formative years were spent in a small, rural town at the intersection of three countries, which led him to a deep curiosity and vision about seeing beyond your own fixed place in life. Collaboration as the tool for business innovation, across borders and fields of expertise, was ingrained in him from the start of his career before it became part of today's standard playbook for commercial success.”

Adds Galien Foundation Chairman Bruno Cohen "When expanding our Awards program to new life sciences sectors such as small start-up enterprises, digital health, and public-private investment Incubators to improve access to life-saving treatments for Global South patients, Bernard was the first supporter. He initiated start-ups and formed a digital health award committee with top leaders. He fostered a partnership between our Foundation and Business France to aid start-ups on both sides of the Atlantic. His addition of new achievement categories has made non-drug technologies a crucial platform shaping our work beyond 2030. Motivated by industry gratitude, he prioritized giving back and recruited committee leaders with a similar ethos." Concludes Cohen, "His passing leaves a hole in our work – and an empty feeling in my heart. All those who work for the inclusive, accessible science that extends life will miss him greatly."

On the occasion of the 2024 Prix Galien USA Forum and Awards Ceremony on Thursday, November 7, in New York, the Foundation will convene a memorial where colleagues and friends can formally acknowledge Bernard Pousot's many contributions to medical science and the collaborative spirit of health technologies as a driver of human potential and development. To his wife, Delphine, and loved ones, may he rest in peace.

About the Galien Foundation

Founded in 2007, the Galien Foundation fosters, recognizes and rewards excellence in scientific innovation to improve human health. Our vision is to be the catalyst for developing the next generation of innovative treatments and technologies that will impact medical research and save lives.

The Foundation oversees and directs activities in the US for the Prix Galien, an international awards program dedicated to progress through innovative medicines development, with chapters in 14 countries and Africa. The Prix Galien was created in 1970 by Roland Mehl in honor of Galien, the father of medical science and modern pharmacology. Worldwide, the Prix Galien is regarded as the equivalent of the Nobel Prize in biopharmaceutical research.