



| PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE |

## **30 Years of Accomplishments**

by Cary A. Presant, M.D.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Association of Community Cancer Centers, and it is important for us to look back and see what our accomplishments have been.

Thirty years ago, the five-year cure rate for cancer was 40 percent. For the most part, surgery was highly invasive, chemotherapy was associated with severe side effects with few supportive drugs, and simple hormone therapies were effective. Radiation therapy methodologies were straightforward with external beam radiation and occasional use of brachytherapy methods.

In 2004 the five-year cure rate has climbed to 60 percent. Surgery has become less invasive, frequently utilizing video-assisted methodologies. Chemotherapy has been dramatically improved with the addition of many new drugs and biological, targeted therapies have replaced chemotherapy in many instances. Hormonal therapy is much more sophisticated. Even radiation oncology has dramatically changed with the addition of sophisticated IMRT, conformal, and advanced brachytherapy methodologies.

Are we to be satisfied with these achievements? Not at all! In the future, we all foresee five-year cure rates of more than 80 percent using advances such as molecular profiling, genomics, proteomics, genetics, and microarray technology to permit detailed individualization of patient therapies.

As we celebrate our past successes, we must also look to the future and dedicate ourselves to new tasks. The first is to implement important improvements in prevention, diagnosis, therapy, and rehabilitation as rapidly as possible. We also need to participate in research of the many new diagnostic and treatment programs that will achieve an improvement in five-year cure rates. Finally, we must work diligently, cohesively, and continuously to ensure that public policy changes fully support the research and implementation of all new advances. As always, ACCC and other organizations will be here to assist us in these Herculean efforts.

As I wrap up my year as President of ACCC, I would like to thank all those who have served before me (see box at right). For it only with dedicated and driven leadership that organizations such as ACCC can continue to flourish and support the oncology community for the next 30 years and beyond.