



ALBERT AND MARY
LASKER FOUNDATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Monday, **December 10, 2007**

CONTACT:

Kendall Christiansen
or Ethan Geto

Geto & de Milly, Inc.

212.686.4551; KC-cell: 917.359.0725

Email: pr@getodemilly.com

PHOTO AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Lasker Foundation Appoints Global Health Leader as New President

December 10, New York City The **Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation** announced that **Dr. Maria Freire** will become President of the Lasker Foundation on March 1, 2008. Dr. Freire is an internationally recognized global health expert; she comes to the Foundation from her position as President and Chief Executive Officer of the non-profit Global Alliance for TB Drug Development, which develops novel, faster and better drugs for tuberculosis. Under her leadership, the TB Alliance grew from a nascent enterprise to having the largest TB drug pipeline in the world. Dr. Freire previously led the Office of Technology Transfer at the U.S. National Institutes of Health.

Dr. Freire will succeed Dr. Neen Hunt, who has guided the Foundation since 1995.

James Fordyce, Chairman of the Lasker Foundation's Board of Trustees, announced the appointment: "We are delighted to welcome Maria Freire as the Lasker Foundation's new President. Dr. Freire brings a passionate commitment and broad perspective to the field of medical research and its potential for curing disease and improving public health. The global perspective she has gained from her outstanding work on tuberculosis will be especially valuable as we look to the future. We also applaud Dr. Hunt for her effective stewardship of the Lasker Foundation over the past twelve years, and for the initiatives launched during her tenure."

Dr. Freire said, "The Lasker Foundation's legacy is exceptional and its future is bright; advancing the field of medical research in the 21st century is increasingly a global imperative, and I welcome the invitation to bring my experience and passion for medical science to serve as the Foundation's next president."

About the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation

Based in New York City since its founding in 1942, the **Lasker Foundation** is an operating foundation best known for its leadership and advocacy on behalf of medical research, principally through its annual

presentation of the distinguished **Lasker Award in Basic Research** and **Lasker Award in Clinical Research**, which together recognize the synergy that is the engine of progress in the fight against disease. The Foundation also presents the **Albert Lasker Award for Special Achievement in Medical Science** that honors lifetime achievement in medical science; it alternates bi-annually with the **Mary Woodard Lasker Award for Public Service**.

A Lasker Award currently carries an honorarium of \$150,000. More than 300 Lasker Awards have been presented since the Awards Program began. As of this year, 75 Lasker Award recipients also have received the Nobel Prize in physiology (medicine) or in chemistry, including this year's three Nobel Awardees for medicine.

The Foundation was among the first to advocate increasing Federal funding for medical research primarily through the National Institutes of Health. To this end, in the 1950's Mary Lasker launched a citizen campaign aimed at increasing funding for research through the NIH which now spends approximately \$30 billion annually to improve the health of the nation. More recently, the Foundation has convened forums and symposiums on challenging issues in medical research, including the interface between clinical research and commerce, valuing the economic benefits of the national investment in research, encouraging translational research, and promoting medical research as a priority with public officials and opinion leaders.

Mary Lasker created the Lasker Awards Program in 1945, which quickly became and remain the nation's top honor for recognizing significant advances in medical research. The international jury of scientists that selects recipients of the Lasker Awards is currently led by Dr. Joseph L. Goldstein, recipient of the 1985 Lasker Award for Basic Medical Research and the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1985 (both with Dr. Michael Brown).

Mary Lasker was America's pre-eminent citizen-advocate on behalf of medical research during the second half of the 20th century. As the country's "First Lady of medical research" she successfully persuaded Presidents and Congressional leaders to expand national investment in medical research primarily through the National Institutes of Health.

Additional information about the Lasker Foundation and the Lasker Awards for Medical Research can be found at www.laskerfoundation.org.

The mission of the Lasker Foundation:
"To foster the prevention and treatment of disease and disability by honoring excellence in basic and clinical science, and through public education and research advocacy."