

## NEWS RELEASE

For more information, contact:  
Barbara Hager, BreastCare Program Director  
Arkansas Department of Health  
Office: 501-661-2495  
Email: Barbara.Hager@arkansas.gov  
www.ARBreastCare.com



### **Josetta Wilkins Awards Honor Breast Health Advocates For Outstanding Work**

*Arkansas Cancer Coalition and BreastCare team up to host annual event*

**March 7, 2011; Little Rock, Ark.** – The Arkansas Cancer Summit and the **Josetta Wilkins Awards** joined together to honor individuals and organizations in Arkansas who have exhibited extraordinary efforts in the fight against cancer.

The annual Josetta Wilkins Awards are presented by **BreastCare**, a program of the **Arkansas Department of Health (ADH)**. BreastCare provides free breast and cervical cancer screening, diagnosis and treatment to Arkansas women who have little or no health insurance.

The Josetta Wilkins Awards are named in honor of former state representative Dr. Josetta Wilkins, whose unyielding perseverance and passion for fighting breast cancer in Arkansas led to the passage of the Breast Cancer Control Act of 1997, which ultimately created the BreastCare program. Honorees this year include:

- Individual – Vickie Vowell, Little Rock
- Professional – V. Suzanne Klimberg, M.D., University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
- Organization – The Merlin Foundation, Green Forest

“We are so proud of our Josetta Wilkins Awards winners this year. Each winner has shown dedication and determination when it comes to educating Arkansas women about breast cancer awareness and prevention. BreastCare continues to be an essential program for Arkansas women. The foundation of this program is breast cancer awareness. BreastCare would not be what it is today without advocates like this year’s winners.” said BreastCare program director, Barbara Hager.

-MORE-

## **MORE ABOUT THE 2011 HONOREES**

### **JOSETTA WILKINS AWARD WINNER FOR A VOLUNTEER INDIVIDUAL**

**Vicki Vowell of Little Rock** is the founder of Runway for a Cause, which will celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> year in 2011. Through her hard work on Runway for a Cause, Vicki facilitated hundreds of thousands of dollars raised for breast cancer research and care for women in Arkansas. Additionally, she has helped to provide hope to those diagnosed through the portrayal of these beautiful and strong women in AY Magazine's annual runway fashion photo shoot.

### **JOSETTA WILKINS AWARD WINNER FOR A PROFESSIONAL INDIVIDUAL**

**Dr. V. Suzanne Klimberg of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences** is the Muriel Balsam Kohn Chair in Breast Surgical Oncology at UAMS, Professor of Surgery and Pathology, Director of Diseases of the Breast Fellowship and Director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute Breast Cancer Program and has over 250 publications. Her research has been funded from the National Institutes of Health, VA Merit Review, Susan G. Komen, American Cancer Society, the Department of Defense, the Fashion Footwear Association of New York (FFANY) and QVC, the Tenenbaum Research Foundation. Dr. Klimberg developed an innovative procedure called axillary reverse mapping (ARM) to prevent one of the most common side effects associated with breast cancer treatment--lymphedema or swelling of the arms due to faulty drainage of the lymph system. Her other research interests focus on the role of glutamine in prevention of breast cancer and the side-effects of breast cancer treatment, the role of biomarkers in tears for detecting breast cancer and radiofrequency ablation for the treatment of breast cancer.

### **JOSETTA WILKINS AWARD WINNER FOR AN ORGANIZATION**

**The Merlin Foundation of Green Forest, AR**, since 2001, The Merlin Foundation has provided a continuum of services for uninsured, low income women of Carroll and Madison counties through screening, education and navigation. Due to the rural nature of these counties, limited access to services, low education and income levels, it continues to be their mission to provide more than health care to their clients. Among those things provided are mammograms, gas and phone cards, bilingual educational material and navigational support to increase the level of early detection and awareness of breast health issues. This program focuses on women over 40. The program has created trust by participation in health fairs and community events. The Merlin Foundation has also built strong partnerships with local hospitals, physicians, clinics, health departments,

as well as the largest local employer, Tyson Foods. With these efforts The Merlin Foundation has been able to reach a diverse, rural and underserved Hispanic population in Carroll and Madison counties.

## **BREASTCARE**

BreastCare provides free breast and cervical cancer screening, diagnosis and treatment to Arkansas women age 40 and older who have little or no health insurance. Since the program began, BreastCare has provided more than 114,000 mammograms and more than 65,000 Pap tests to Arkansas women. For more information about the BreastCare program, visit [www.ARBreastCare.com](http://www.ARBreastCare.com) or call 1-877-670-6703 (CARE).

# # #