Remembering Valerie Guild, a Tireless Advocate for Patients with Melanoma

Valerie Guild (pictured right), Founder and President of the non-profit organization AIM at Melanoma, died on May 21, 2020 of complications from cancer. She served as a patient advocate on ECOG-ACRIN’s Melanoma Committee for over ten years, helping to ensure the patient experience was represented throughout the research process. Those familiar with her note her loss will be felt deeply—and not just at ECOG-ACRIN.

“This is a huge loss for melanoma advocacy on a global scale,” said John M. Kirkwood, MD, former Chair of the EA Melanoma Committee and current Co-Chair of the Prevention, Screening and Surveillance Committee. “Val and AIM at Melanoma knitted together the international melanoma community for 15 years.”

Val founded AIM at Melanoma after losing her 26-year-old daughter to the disease. Va’s numerous accomplishments include: creating the first and only international think tank in melanoma, the International Melanoma Working Group; launching the AIM at Melanoma website to bring vital information and education to patients, caregivers, and families; opening the first collaborative fresh-frozen primary tissue bank for melanoma; obtaining the first Department of Defense grant for melanoma and skin cancer research; and working with lawmakers in nearly every state to attempt to ban indoor tanning for minors.

“This is a significant loss in so many ways,” said Jedd D. Wolchok, MD, PhD, current chair of the Melanoma Committee. “Val was indeed the heart and soul of many advocacy efforts.”

AIM at Melanoma plans to continue its work in Va’s memory with her daughter, Samantha Guild, assuming the role of President.