

CITATIONS

MICHELLE SIE WHITTEN

Distinguished Service Award

Michelle Sie Whitten is passionately dedicated to significantly improving the lives of people with Down syndrome through research, medical care, education, and advocacy. As the Executive Director of the Anna and John J. Sie Foundation, and as the co-founder, president and CEO of the Global Down Syndrome Foundation, Whitten has created a legacy that is profoundly and positively impacting the lives of people with Down syndrome and their families in Colorado and throughout the world.

Whitten was a strategic architect in establishing the Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome (Crnic Institute) on the CU Anschutz Medical Campus – the first academic home in the United States for research and medical care benefitting people with Down syndrome. The Crnic Institute includes the Anna and John J. Sie Center for Down Syndrome at Children’s Hospital Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Alzheimer’s Disease Center - both part of the CU School of Medicine.

Whitten set up the Global Down Syndrome Foundation (Global) to ensure the success of the Crnic Institute and to elongate life and improve health outcomes. To this end, her work with Congress and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) led to a long-overdue and landmark doubling of NIH funding for Down syndrome research.

For ten years Whitten has worked shoulder to shoulder with CU leadership, scientists, and clinicians with extraordinary vision, energy, detailed planning, and great expectations, inspiring our community and leading to landmark results.

“Michelle is a ball of fire,” said Tom Blumenthal, PhD, Director Emeritus of the Crnic Institute. “She is creative, intelligent, courageous, and tireless in pursuit of her goals. And her goals are good ones - good for CU, for people with Down syndrome, for the state of Colorado, and indeed the world.”

Whitten’s parents, Anna and John J. Sie, are immigrants from Italy and China. Prior to her non-profit career, she worked in the international cable TV industry for 15 years. With her husband, a British National, she has two children - Sophia & Patrick. Sophia happens to have Down syndrome and is the inspiration behind Global. The Whittens and Sies could have focused solely on Sophia. Instead they have dedicated their lives to creating a brighter future for all people with Down syndrome.

Whitten’s dedication has led to investment in groundbreaking research allowing us to recast Down syndrome as an immune system disorder, to understand why nearly all people with Down syndrome will have early-onset of Alzheimer’s disease and why it is extraordinarily rare for someone with the condition to have a solid tumor.

To support this work, Global organizes the largest Down syndrome fundraiser in the world, the Be Beautiful Be Yourself Fashion Show, and publishes the award-winning Down Syndrome World™ magazine. Global’s programs and events ensure that people with Down syndrome are treated with dignity and have the opportunity to reach their potential.

Whitten’s tireless pursuit of excellence in care, research, and advocacy has yielded better lives for all, and her commitment to the University of Colorado is today honored by the CU Board of Regents and the CU community with the Distinguished Service Award.



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ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS
SPRING COMMENCEMENT
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