

# 2014 HARRY PINCHOT AWARDS

By Jan Manarite & Bill Manning

*Every year at the Prostate Cancer Conference the PCRI presents the Harry Pinchot Award to advocate that exemplifies the same tireless advocacy and patient support Harry Pinchot was known for. This year there were two! Joel Nowak (left) and Gene Van Vleet (right).*



Joel Nowak has fought thyroid cancer, prostate cancer, kidney cancer, and melanoma. In each situation, involvement in his own treatment made a significant difference in the outcome of the disease. Joel understands patient empowerment at a very personal level and has volunteered hundreds upon hundreds of hours helping men with advanced prostate cancer do the same. He has always been dependable for productive idea-sharing, honest feedback, and showed a willingness to step up, step back, or step any direction that helped to create solutions for prostate cancer patients. This is great advocacy, something Harry Pinchot always worked towards.

Joel writes a blog, which can be found at [www.advancedprostatecancer.net](http://www.advancedprostatecancer.net) where patients and caregivers can also post and interact with each other. Joel also works to further support for cancer research, for education, and for survivors. His activities have included providing testimony for government agencies, reviewing grant applications, running both live and internet support groups, speaking at cancer related conferences, health fairs, writing, and even meeting face to face with diagnosed cancer patients to help them navigate their realities. Of special note, Joel has led the advanced prostate cancer support group at the PCRI Conference for the past several years. His room is always packed.

Gene van Vleet's drive to learn about his disease, propelled him on a path involving a considerable amount of research. Gene works tirelessly for the Informed Prostate Cancer Support Group (IPCSG), at meetings, at home, on the phone, and developing a newsletter. Even while hospitalized, he was still taking calls and helping men with their cancer. His compassion and extensive knowledge allow him not only relate to other men, but to speak to their situation with authority, helping them navigate the endlessly changing waters of prostate cancer and its treatment. He has worked hard to fill the information gap pointing men in the right direction. And all of this is with a smile on his face!

Whether it's answering calls from across the country on the group's hotline, arranging speakers for monthly meetings, writing a newsletter, working as IPCSG COO, doing community outreach, or spending countless hours helping men navigate the labyrinth of treatments and information, it would be difficult to think of anyone more deserving of the 2014 Harry Pinchot award.

**Congratulations to these amazing men, Joel and Gene, for winning the 2014 Harry Pinchot Award!**