

February 15, 1991



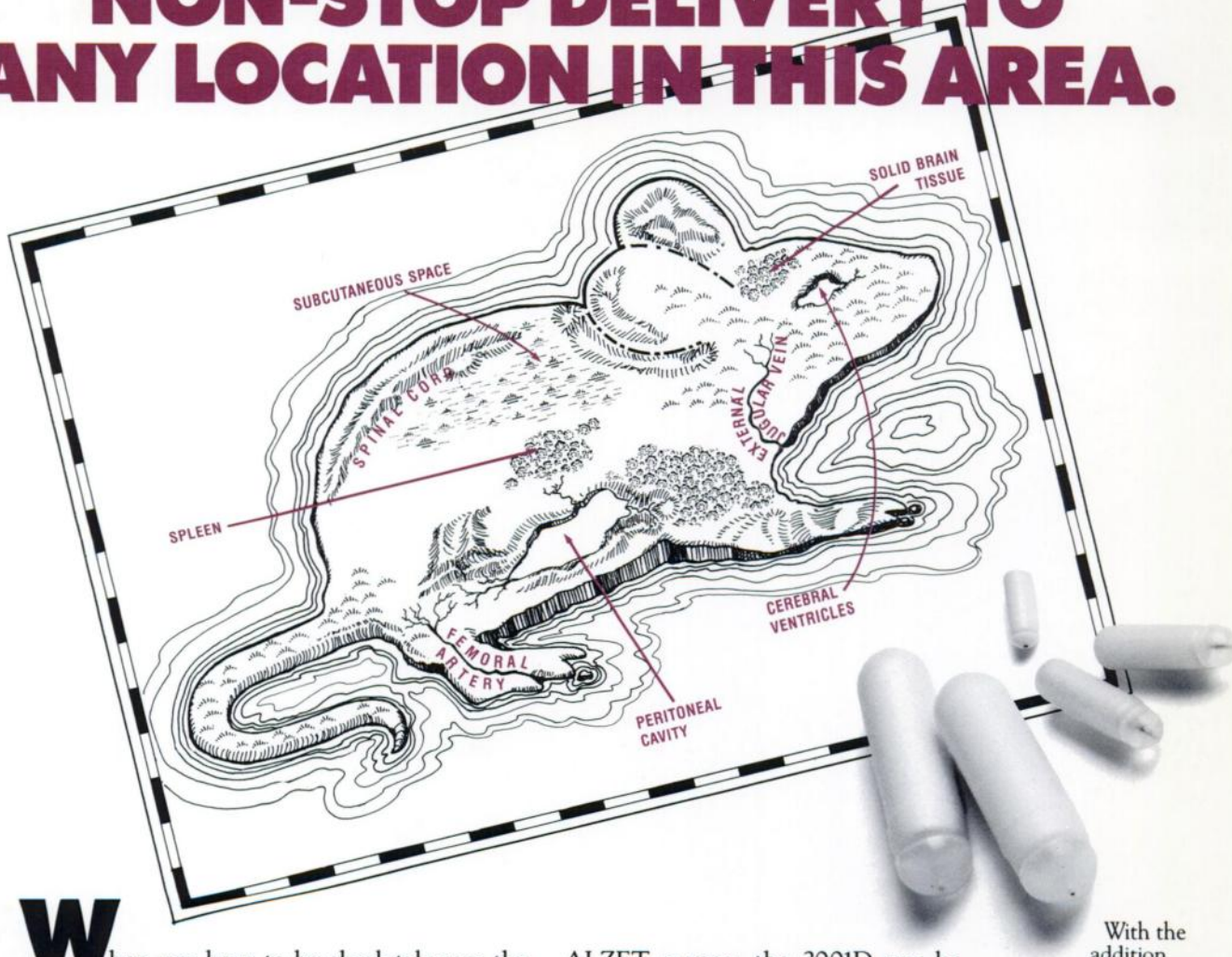
Cancer Research

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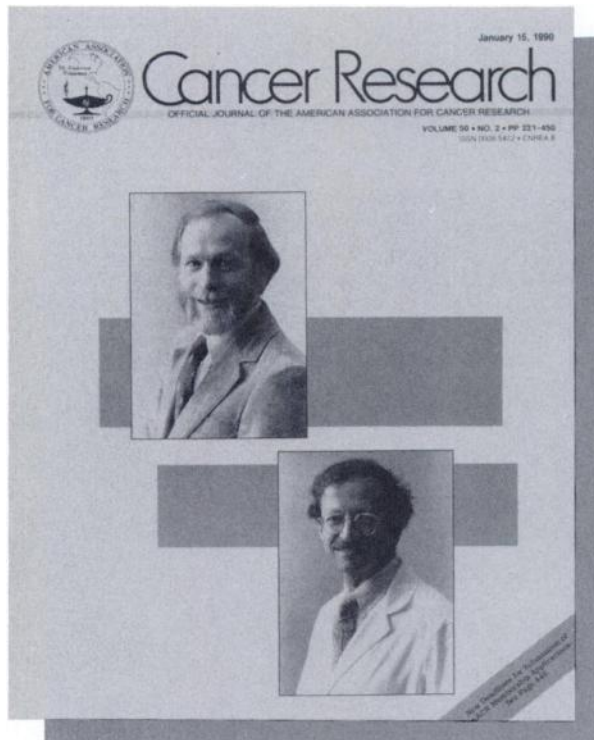
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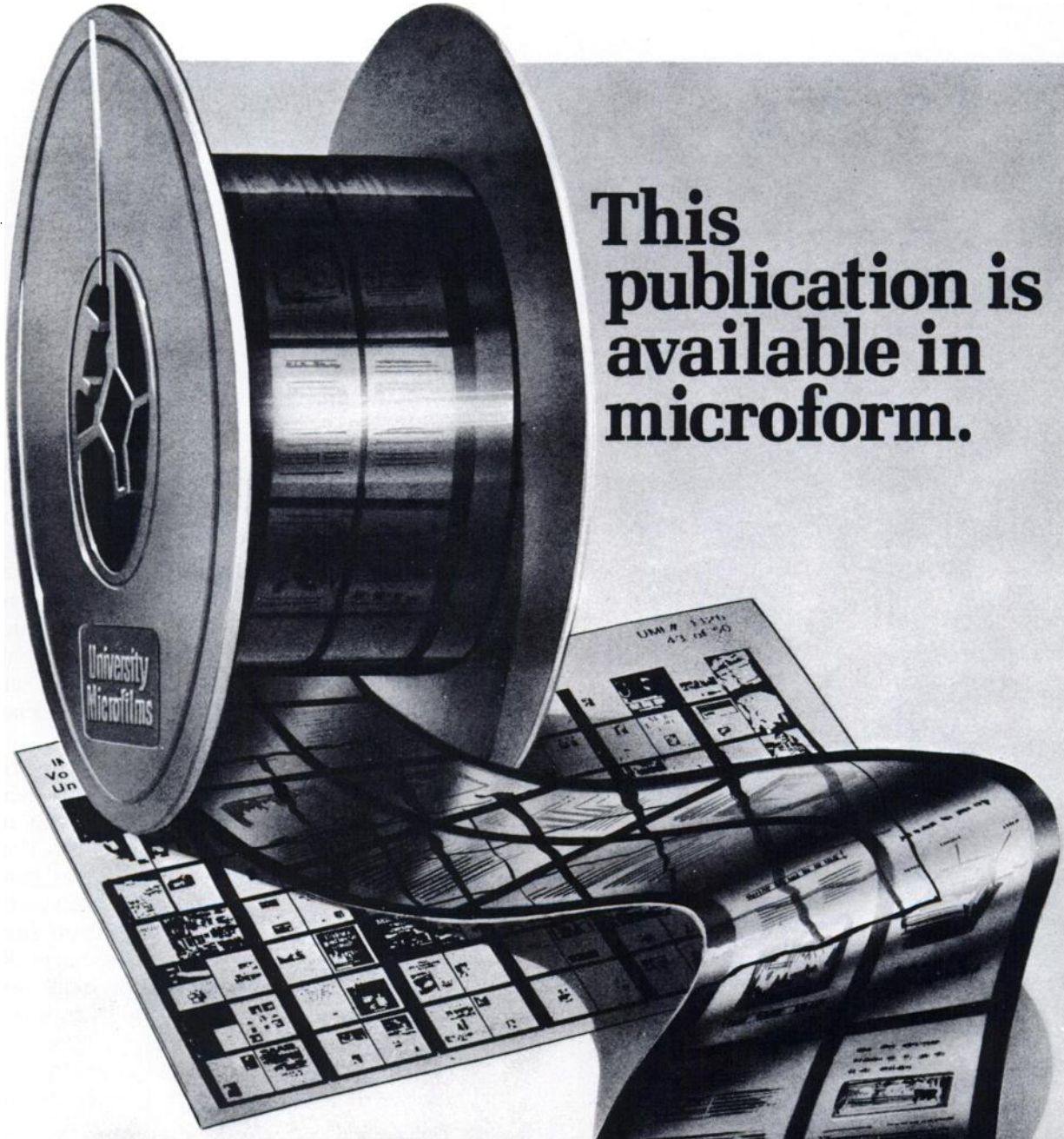
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COVER LEGEND



The history of the United States Cancer Program began in 1910 when President Taft visited the first cancer research center at Roswell Park Memorial Institute to try to initiate a National Cancer Program. Despite President Taft's failure to get Congress to support this effort, cancer research programs grew over the next several decades through the efforts of public as well as private citizens, researchers and clinicians in oncology, and cancer organizations such as the American Cancer Society, the American Association for Cancer Research, and the Association of American Cancer Institutes. In 1970, these groups petitioned Congress to develop a National Cancer Program to mobilize the biomedical resources of the nation to advance a national effort against cancer. As

a result, on December 23, 1971, the National Cancer Act, signed by President Nixon, became law.

This act gave the National Cancer Institute a dual mandate to expand its basic and clinical research programs. This mandate translated into a research and clinical program that is unequalled anywhere in the world. It established a national network that resulted in the vast growth of over 60 cancer centers and institutes in the United States, established over 50 community clinical oncology programs, trained many cancer specialists, enabled the expansion of clinical cooperative groups to do high priority clinical trials, created cancer prevention and control programs, and developed a cancer information system for physicians and the public.

The National Cancer Act also assigned special privileges to the National Cancer Institute by authorizing an independent budget that is sent directly to the President and Congress and by providing for the Presidential appointment of the President's Cancer Panel and the National Cancer Advisory Board to advise the President and the National Cancer Institute on directions of the National Cancer Program. It also provided for construction funds and allowed support of research in foreign countries to expedite our understanding of cancer from a worldwide perspective.

In this 20th anniversary year of the National Cancer Act, it is important that the cancer community take the necessary steps to revitalize, rededicate, and strengthen the commitment of our nation's citizens to eradicate cancer through research and prevention. The American Association for Cancer Research salutes the early leaders of the National Cancer Program by featuring the first National Cancer Advisory Board on this issue's cover and asks all members to urge their legislators to reauthorize the National Cancer Act.

Edwin A. Mirand



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