



## **Albert Szent-Györgyi Prize for Progress in Cancer Research Announced by the National Foundation for Cancer Research**

**(Bethesda, Maryland, January 22, 2007)** -- Webster K. Cavenee Webster K. Cavenee has been awarded the Albert Szent-Györgyi Prize for Progress in Cancer Research by the National Foundation for Cancer Research. Cavenee, director of the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research San Diego Branch, which is based at UCSD, won the prize for his groundbreaking discoveries regarding the genetic mechanisms of predisposition to human cancer. Cavenee's research provided the first genetic evidence for the existence of tumor suppressor genes, one of the most influential breakthroughs in cancer research.

The annual Albert Szent-Györgyi Prize for Progress in Cancer Research was established to recognize outstanding scientific achievement in the war against cancer and to honor pioneering scientists who have made extraordinary contributions in the field of cancer research. The prize is designed to draw attention to the continued need to support basic cancer research and the role that it plays in new cancer therapies. The prize includes a \$25,000 honorarium.

"Dr. Cavenee is a pioneer in the truest sense of the word. His research on tumor suppressor genes has not only advanced our understanding of cancer, but it also has provided valuable insight in the role that hereditary predisposition plays into developing cancer," said Dr. Harold Dvorak of Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital and chair of the Szent-Györgyi Prize Selection Committee.

"Dr. Cavenee's discoveries have helped to pave the way for researchers to better break down cancer's complicated molecular structures and understand the role that tumor suppressor genes play in cancer growth and development," said Dr. Sujuan Ba, co-chair of the Szent-Györgyi Prize Selection Committee and chief scientific officer of the National Foundation for Cancer Research.

Cavenee's original research seeking to define the genetic lesions in retinoblastoma led to the first hard experimental evidence for the existence of tumor suppressor genes in humans. This breakthrough confirmed the "two-hit hypothesis," fundamentally altering

the way scientists think about the onset of cancer and its progression. Today, mutations of tumor suppressor genes have been identified in more than half of all tumors, including those of muscle, melanocytes, kidney, prostate, and breast. Novel gene therapies to reverse gene mutations or their effects in cancer cells hold promise as cancer treatment strategies which could be of benefit to cancer patients.

Cavenee is a Fellow of the National Foundation for Cancer Research and has won many honors, including the Charles S. Mott Prize of the General Motors Cancer Research Foundation. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, a former president of the American Association for Cancer Research, a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology, and serves on the editorial boards of several journals. He has also served on the board of both the Scientific Counselors of the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. Cavenee received his doctorate from the University of Kansas School of Medicine.

"The Albert Szent-Györgyi Prize for Progress in Cancer Research means a great deal to the cancer research field and I am humbled to have been selected by my peers to receive it. It is my hope that the discoveries I am being recognized for will have significant long-term impact on those patients who suffer from cancer around the world. That is the real prize," said Cavenee. "The support of the National Foundation for Cancer Research over the years both for this prize and for basic cancer research has been a vital part of many significant research discoveries."

The Albert Szent-Györgyi Prize for Progress in Cancer Research was established by the National Foundation for Cancer Research in honor of its co-founder, Dr. Albert Szent-Györgyi, recipient of the 1937 Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine for his study on Vitamin C and cell respiration. Szent-Györgyi was a leading advocate for developing resources to provide scientists with the financial support necessary to pursue novel cancer research ideas. Any scientist or individual may be nominated for the annual award by their peers and the winner is selected by a prize selection committee comprised of academic, scientific, business and non-profit leaders highly qualified to review and select the Prize winner.