

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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UT SOUTHWESTERN SCIENTIST RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR LIPID RESEARCH

DALLAS – Nov. 6, 2003 – Dr. David J. Mangelsdorf, professor of pharmacology and biochemistry at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas and an associate investigator in the university's Howard Hughes Medical Institute, has been awarded Germany's highly respected Heinrich Wieland Prize for his research on lipids.

The prestigious international science award is given annually to one individual for research in the fields of biochemistry, chemistry and physiology of fats and lipids and its clinical importance.

Dr. Mangelsdorf's research focuses on the mechanisms of nuclear receptor proteins that serve as sensors in protecting human cells against unusually high and possibly toxic levels of lipids, such as cholesterol and fatty acids. These lipid-sensing proteins play a central role in the maintenance of physiological levels of lipids consumed with food. Dr. Mangelsdorf's work signifies an important contribution to the elucidation of the mechanism that the body uses to restore the balance following an increase in cholesterol levels.

Three other UT Southwestern scientists have received the Wieland Prize since its inception in 1963.

Nobel laureates Drs. Michael Brown and Joseph Goldstein claimed the award in 1974 for their research in lipoprotein receptors and the genetic control of cholesterol metabolism. They shared the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine in 1985 for their discovery of the underlying mechanisms of cholesterol metabolism, which led to the development of statin drugs – now used by 13 million Americans – to treat high cholesterol.

Dr. John Dietschy, professor of internal medicine, received the Wieland Prize in 1983 while he was chief of gastroenterology at UT Southwestern for his research into the regulation of cholesterol balance in tissues.

"It is quite an honor to be considered in the running for this award, next to these other great names, and even more to receive it," Dr. Mangelsdorf said. "It reflects the great stature of UT

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WIELAND PRIZE – 2

Southwestern and the caliber of science that is conducted here, particularly in the field of lipid biology. Our institution has made a mark internationally in this field.”

The work of Drs. Brown, Goldstein and Dietschy served as a foundation upon which his lab was able to build, Dr. Mangelsdorf said.

“When I made my discoveries, I was standing on some pretty big shoulders,” he said. “Figuring out what I had discovered and realizing its significance required a knowledge base that is found in only one place in the world in such a concentrated fashion, and that is here at UT Southwestern. I was able to take advantage of enormous resources to really drive this research.”

Dr. Brown, director of the Erik Jonsson Center for Research in Molecular Genetics and Human Disease, said, “Dr. Mangelsdorf has made major contributions to our understanding of the machinery that controls the metabolism of cholesterol, and he is eminently deserving of the recognition embodied in the Wieland Prize.

“UT Southwestern has a 45-year tradition of discovery in cholesterol metabolism going back to the late Dr. Marvin Siperstein, who initiated cholesterol research in Dallas, and including Dr. Jean Wilson (clinical professor of internal medicine at UT Southwestern) and Dr. Dietschy. Joe Goldstein and I are proud to have been part of this tradition, and we are delighted that Dr. Mangelsdorf has received this well-earned recognition as its most recent standard-bearer.”

Dr. Mangelsdorf has expanded earlier research to include how single cells react to cholesterol, said Dr. Dietschy. “He has brought an entire new area into this, showing how the nucleus of a living cell figures out how much cholesterol is inside it and attempts to get rid of any excess. That UT Southwestern has had four scientists receive this award reflects the fact that our university is at the center of the world for studies involving cholesterol metabolism.”

Dr. Kern Wildenthal, president of UT Southwestern, agreed. “The Heinrich Wieland Prize is a prestigious international award that brings recognition not only to Dr. Mangelsdorf and the work he is doing, but also highlights UT Southwestern and its role at the forefront of medical research and groundbreaking breakthroughs in the area of cholesterol therapies.”

Dr. Mangelsdorf will fly to Munich to receive the award, which includes about \$29,500 in cash. The award is named after German chemist and Nobel Prize winner Dr. Heinrich Otto Wieland (1877-1957).

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