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Two UT Southwestern researchers elected to National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine

DALLAS – Oct. 8, 2007 – Two UT Southwestern Medical Center researchers – a distinguished developmental biologist and a leading neuroscientist – have been elected to the Institute of Medicine, a component of the prestigious National Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Luis Parada, professor and chairman of developmental biology, and Dr. Thomas Südhof, professor and chairman of neuroscience, were among 65 new national members and four foreign associates announced today by the organization, which addresses national health issues.

“The best validation of one’s work is approval by one’s peers, so I’m delighted to be elected to the Institute of Medicine,” Dr. Parada said.

The election of Drs. Parada and Südhof brings the number of current UT Southwestern faculty members inducted into the institute to 21, the largest representation at one institution in Texas and surrounding states.

“I am deeply honored to be elected to this prestigious body of medical scientists,” said Dr. Südhof, who is an investigator in the Howard Hughes Medical Institute at UT Southwestern.

Members of the Institute of Medicine shape policies affecting public health and advise the federal government on issues involving medical care, research and education. Selection is based on international distinction in science, clinical medicine, public health or medical administration. Inductees are elected by incumbent members.

“This is a great distinction for two of UT Southwestern’s most accomplished faculty members,” said Dr. Kern Wildenthal, president of UT Southwestern. “Dr. Parada and Dr. Südhof are highly admired for both their research and their leadership, and this recognition shows that their national colleagues have great regard for their contributions.”

Dr. Parada holds the Diana K. and Richard C. Strauss Distinguished Chair in Developmental Biology and the Southwestern Ball Distinguished Chair in Nerve Regeneration Research. He also is director of the Kent Waldrep Center for Basic Research on Nerve Growth and Regeneration.

Dr. Parada’s research integrates the fields of molecular genetics, embryonic development and
(MORE)

Institute of Medicine – 2

signal transduction. His studies have provided critical insights into brain development and cancer biology, and have led to the identification of molecules that inhibit nerve regeneration after injury.

“Our approach has always been to relate cancer and other diseases to problems associated with development and to thereby gain a unique insight into human disease,” Dr. Parada said.

Dr. Parada earned his doctorate in biology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was head of the Molecular Embryology Section in the Mammalian Genetics Laboratory of the National Cancer Institute before joining UT Southwestern in 1994. He has received numerous honors, including membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and being named an American Cancer Society Research Professor.

Dr. Südhof holds the Gill Distinguished Chair in Neuroscience and the Loyd B. Sands Distinguished Chair in Neuroscience. He also directs the C. Vincent Prothro Center for Research in Basic Neuroscience and the Gill Center for Research on Brain Cell Communication.

Dr. Südhof studies nerve-cell interaction and neurotransmitter release, a process that initiates communication between one neuron and another in the brain. His research has led to a better understanding of brain function under normal and pathologic conditions, such as Alzheimer’s disease. In 2001 Dr. Südhof and his collaborators made a breakthrough discovery about the role of a protein involved in the onset of Alzheimer’s, a finding that may have a profound impact on how doctors treat the disease.

A member of the National Academy of Sciences, Dr. Südhof received his medical degree from the Georgia Augusta University of Göttingen, Germany, in 1982. He did postdoctoral work at the Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry in Göttingen and with Nobel laureates Dr. Joseph Goldstein and Dr. Michael Brown at UT Southwestern. He joined the UT Southwestern faculty in 1986.

Four other Texans elected this week to the Institute of Medicine will increase the membership affiliated with Texas academic or medical institutions to 47, with UT Southwestern faculty contributing 45 percent of that total.

The other newly elected Texans are: Dr. Nancy W. Dickey, president of the Health Science Center and vice chancellor for health affairs at Texas A&M University; Dr. Ellen R. Gritz, professor and chair behavioral science at UT M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Houston; Dr. Cynthia D. Mulrow, deputy editor of *Annals of Internal Medicine*, American College of Physicians, San Antonio; and Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, professor of epidemiology and biostatistics, and director of the Institute for Health Promotion

(MORE)

Institute of Medicine – 3

Research, School of Medicine, University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio.

Current Institute of Medicine members at UT Southwestern and the year of their induction are: Dr. George Lister (2006), Dr. Ellen Vitetta (2006), Dr. Steven McKnight (2005), Dr. Helen Hobbs (2004), Dr. John McConnell (2004), Dr. Norman Gant (2001), Dr. Eric Olson (2001), Dr. Kern Wildenthal (1999), Dr. Eric Nestler (1998), Dr. Carol Tamminga (1998), Dr. Ron Anderson (1997), Dr. Scott Grundy (1995), Dr. Jean Wilson (1994), Dr. Daniel Foster (1989), Dr. Alfred Gilman (1989), Dr. Michael Brown (1987), Dr. Joseph Goldstein (1987), Dr. Ronald Estabrook, (1975) and Dr. Donald Seldin (1974).

Deceased members of the UT Southwestern faculty who were members of the Institute of Medicine are Dr. Paul MacDonald (1987), Dr. Charles Sprague (1979) and Dr. Bryan Williams (1970).

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