

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE ALBERT LASKER MEDICAL RESEARCH AWARDS

Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation

September 28, 1995

DINNER PROGRAM

Opening Remarks and Special Presentation

MR. JAMES W. FORDYCE

President, Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation

Recognition of the Laureates

JORDAN U. GUTTERMAN, M.D.

Director, Albert Lasker Medical Research Awards Program

Reflections on the Lasker Award

SELECTED LAUREATES

Closing Remarks

MR. JAMES W. FORDYCE

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

New York, New York

50 *Years of the Lasker Awards*

The Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation celebrates a significant milestone in 1995 — the golden anniversary of the Albert Lasker Medical Research Awards. For half a century, the Lasker Awards have honored scientists, physicians, and public servants whose achievements in medical science, clinical practice and public service have had extraordinary impact on public health. Over 300 Lasker Awards have been given. Fifty two Award winners have later won Nobel Prizes.

With the objective of increasing public awareness about the benefits of medical science and its potential to reduce fatal and disabling diseases, as well as the importance of Federal funding for research, Albert and Mary Lasker exhibited remarkable prescience and courage in their decision to establish the Lasker Foundation in 1942. Following Albert Lasker's death in 1953, Mary pursued the Foundation's mission with a unique passion. Her work had a major influence on health and science in America, in large part through her heroic efforts to expand support for the National Institutes of Health.

The Laskers' view that public understanding of the goals of medical research would be essential to their attainment was visionary. In creating separate awards for basic research, clinical research and public service, they sought to highlight primary means by which medical science and public action would result in reducing disease and disability.

Mary Woodard Lasker set high and uncompromising standards that have guided the selection of the Lasker Award winners. The Award nominees are judged by a jury of preeminent scientists. This process of review and evaluation has insured the selection of individuals whose accomplishments are dazzling. Unique among scientific laurels, the Lasker Awards look to the future in recognizing and emphasizing the promise of new discoveries over work which has become established in practice.



ALBERT D. LASKER



MARY WOODARD LASKER

During the past fifty years, the Lasker Awards have acknowledged discoveries that are distinguished by their scope and variety, and their consequences for human health. At the end of World War II, the centrality of DNA as the hereditary material only recently had been suggested; penicillin had just proven its value; streptomycin was still in the lab; and the National Cancer Institute was less than a decade old. Cardiovascular surgery was novel, and the heart-lung machine had not been invented. The polio vaccine was still a dream, and the double helix had not been described properly. Hypertension was a mystery, tuberculosis was incurable, and the treatment of mental illness was primitive. Birth control pills, tranquilizing medications, antidepressants and antihypertensives were treatments of the future. Basic understanding of immunology, genetics, endocrinology and oncology, with the ability to transform modern medical science, was beyond grasp.

Fifty years later, we are witness to revolutions in molecular biology and genetics which are rewriting the canon of basic medical knowledge. Today we take for granted that antibiotics will cure infections, that vaccines can prevent them, that medications can improve heart function and that surgery can repair it; that enzymes, hormones and joints all can be replaced, and that cancer will be understood and successfully treated.

The most fundamental revolution in the past half century, though, is the one which Mary Woodard Lasker, in her wisdom, helped us to see – and that is a revolution in our expectations of medical research.

Progress as an idea was born in the 17th century, but the belief that practical advances in science could be the routine result of a well-funded national program of research is a product of the post-war era. Mary would put it simply, “Money buys ideas.” As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Albert Lasker Medical Research Awards, we dedicate ourselves to maintaining the vision of the Laskers and their hope that all human beings can live in health. This vision, fulfilled with each Lasker Award given, and as death and disability are reduced, reflects the work of Albert and Mary Lasker and now that of the Foundation which they established.

*Previous Albert Lasker Awards
given by the
Albert and Mary Lasker
Foundation*

BASIC RESEARCH AWARDS

1994

Stanley B. Prusiner, M.D.

For landmark, revolutionary work that established the existence of an entirely new class of infectious agents, and which opened new understanding of the pathogenesis of several baffling neurodegenerative diseases.

1993

Günter Blobel, M.D., Ph.D.

For landmark discoveries concerning the processes by which intercellular proteins are targeted across cell membranes.

1991

Edward B. Lewis, Ph.D.

For fundamental research on the Bithorax Complex which established the role of homeotic genes in the development of cell patterns and provided a foundation for current studies of embryonic development.

Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard, Ph.D.

For charting new paths in developmental biology through investigations which led to the discovery of nearly all genes responsible for organizing basic body patterns.

1989

Michael J. Berridge, Ph.D., F.R.S.

For his masterful research revealing how IP3 governs the intracellular level of calcium and orchestrates the major activities of the cell.

Alfred G. Gilman, M.D., Ph.D.*

For his pioneering studies of signal transduction and for his discovery that G-proteins carry signals that regulate vital processes within cells.

Edwin G. Krebs, M.D.*

For his seminal finding that phosphorylation activates major enzymes in cells, and for perceiving the profound importance of protein kinase enzymes.

Yasutomi Nishizuka, M.D., Ph.D.

For his profound contributions to the understanding of signal transduction in cells, and for his discovery that carcinogens trigger cell growth by activating protein kinase C.

1988

Thomas R. Cech, Ph.D.*

For his revolutionary research revealing the enzymatic role of RNA, opening a new universe in molecular biology.

Phillip A. Sharp, Ph.D.*

For his series of revelations regarding the ability of RNA processing to convert DNA's massive store of genetic data to biological use.

1987

Leroy Hood, M.D., Ph.D.

For his prolific and imaginative studies of somatic recombinations in the immune system, detailing in molecular terms the genetics of antibody diversity.

Philip Leder, M.D.

For his elegant genetic studies, particularly in carcinogenesis, and for developing transgenic laboratory animals for the study of cancer and other diseases.

Susumu Tonegawa, Ph.D.*

For brilliantly demonstrating that the DNA responsible for antibody production is routinely reshuffled to create new genes during the lifetime of an individual.

1986

Rita Levi-Montalcini, M.D.*

For her original concept that cell growth is governed by soluble substances, and for the discovery of Nerve Growth Factor (NGF).

Stanley Cohen, Ph.D.*

For discovering and biochemically defining Epidermal Growth Factor (EGF) which illuminated the dynamics of cell growth.

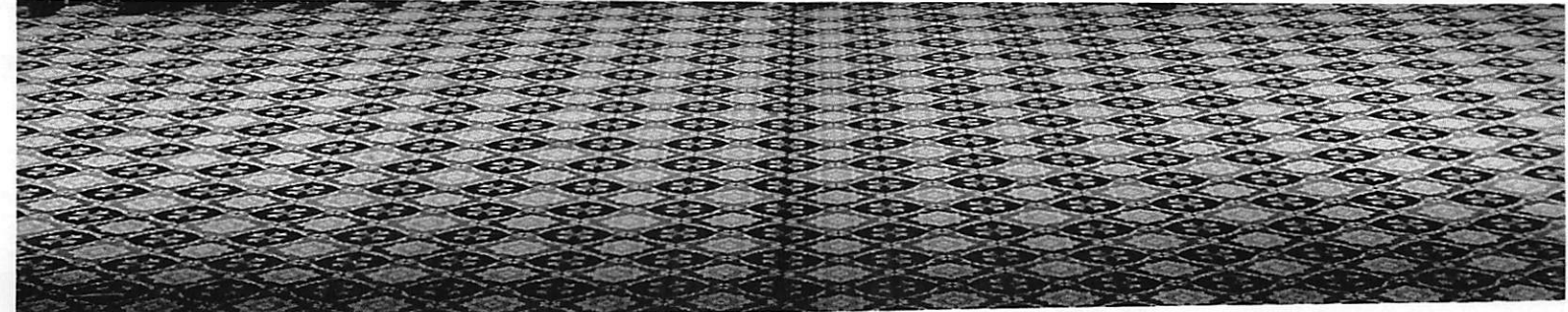
1985

Michael S. Brown, M.D.* and

Joseph L. Goldstein, M.D.*

For their historic discovery of the basic mechanisms controlling cholesterol metabolism, opening the way to





ALBERT LASKER AWARD LAUREATES
50th Anniversary Luncheon
The Pierre Hotel, New York City
September 29, 1995

Front row, left to right:

Ronald Finn
John G. Gorman
Paul G. Rogers
Robert I. Levy
C. Walton Lillehei
Herbert E. Warden
Robin Chandler Duke
Rosalyn S. Yalow
Heinz E. Lehmann
Heinz Fraenkel-Conrat
Isaac Djerassi
Henry J. Heimlich
Maclyn McCarty
Edward B. Lewis
James Hillier
Joseph L. Goldstein
Michael E. DeBakey

Second row, left to right:

Roger C.L. Guillemin
Stanley B. Prusiner
Alfred G. Gilman
Joseph H. Burchenal
James F. Holland
Robert C. Gallo

H. Gobind Khorana
Emil R. Unanue
R. Bruce Merrifield
Hidesaburo Hanafusa
Paul C. Lauterbur
Robert Austrian
Emil C. Gotschlich
Donald Pinkel
John A. Clements
Robert A. Good

Back row, left to right:

Jack L. Strominger
Don C. Wiley
Vincent J. Freda
Sir John R. Vane
Gunter Blobel
Barry J. Marshall
Theodore T. Puck
Rolf M. Zinkernagel
Peter C. Doherty
Roscoe O. Brady
Nancy S. Wexler
Solomon H. Snyder
Eric R. Kandel
Emil Frei III

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