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UNMC names Scientist Laureate, Distinguished Scientists

by Karen Burbach, UNMC public affairs

Stephen Rennard, M.D., has been named the first UNMC Scientist Laureate for his outstanding work in pulmonary research. The award is the highest recognition given to a UNMC scientist.

Dr. Rennard was among 25 investigators recently named UNMC Distinguished Scientists for 2006. The scientists - all recognized leaders in their field -- represent the College of Dentistry, Nursing, Medicine, Pharmacy and the UNMC Eppley Cancer Center.

UNMC deans and directors last week notified the 25 honorees of their selection as Distinguished Scientists. The award, sponsored by the chancellor, recognizes those UNMC researchers who have been among the most productive scientists in the country over the past five years.

"These award winners are some of the real heroes of the UNMC research program," said Thomas Rosenquist, Ph.D., vice chancellor for research at UNMC. "Their selection was based upon rigorous criteria, and the competition was very strong. I am proud of the true excellence of all of the UNMC research professionals.

"As scientist laureate, Dr. Rennard ranked the best of the best," Dr. Rosenquist said.

A panel composed of all UNMC deans and directors, as well as the office of the vice chancellor for research, selected the award recipients. Criteria for the award include the researcher's history of leading an outstanding research program, publishing research results in journals of the highest quality, and showing the ability to attract and retain extramural funding.

The 2006 Distinguished Scientists receive a merit-based salary supplement of \$10,000. As scientist laureate, Dr. Rennard will receive a \$20,000 supplement. UNMC will host an event in March to publicly recognize each honoree's research accomplishments.



Dr. Rennard, Larson Professor of Medicine in pulmonary and critical care in internal medicine and courtesy professor of pathology and microbiology at UNMC, joined UNMC in 1984 as chief of pulmonary and critical care, a position he retained until 1997. He also is currently the director of the Nebraska Office of Tobacco Control and Research.

He received his bachelor's degree from Harvard University and his medical degree from the Baylor College of Medicine, Texas. He completed internal medicine training at Barnes Hospital, Washington University in St. Louis, Mo., and trained in pulmonary diseases at the National Institutes of Health where he remained for seven years, conducting research in the cell biology of lung disease.

Dr. Rennard is active in several professional societies and has served on the Board of Directors for the American Thoracic Society, the Council of the American Lung Association and was a governor for the American College of Chest Physicians. He served on the American Board of Internal Medicine, Pulmonary Section and was a member of the expert panel, which prepared the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease guidelines for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

Dr. Rennard is the North American editor for Respiratory Medicine and serves on the editorial board of several journals. He maintains an active program of clinical investigation in COPD and smoking cessation and a program of basic research in the mechanisms of lung tissue repair and remodeling.

The 2006 Distinguished Scientists are:

College of Dentistry

Jeffrey Payne, D.D.S.
Margaret Wheelock, Ph.D.

College of Nursing

Ann Berger, Ph.D.
Susan Noble Walker, Ed.D.

College of Medicine

Surinder Batra, Ph.D.
Carol Casey, Ph.D.
Wing C. (John) Chan, M.D.
Steve Hinrichs, M.D.
Pascale Lane, M.D., (MMI)
Ming-Fong Lin, Ph.D.
William Mayhan, Ph.D.
Keith Mueller, Ph.D.
Stephen Rennard, M.D., UNMC Scientist Laureate 2006
J. Graham Sharp, Ph.D.

Rakesh Singh, Ph.D.
Shelley Smith, Ph.D., (MMI)
Geoffrey Thiele, Ph.D.
Wallace Thoresen, Ph.D.

College of Pharmacy

Alexander Kabanov, Ph.D.
Uday Kompella, Ph.D.
Vinod Labhassetwar, Ph.D.

Eppley Institute

Michael A. (Tony) Hollingsworth, Ph.D.
Robert Lewis, Ph.D.
Joyce Solheim, Ph.D.
Kay-Uwe Wagner, Ph.D.

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