ASGCT Presidential Symposium to Feature Laureates of the Prestigious 2015 Japan Prize

Japan Prize Recipients to be Honored at ASGCT's 19th Annual Meeting

Milwaukee, WI (PRWEB) April 14, 2016 -- Dr. Alain Fischer and Dr. Theodore Friedmann, recipients of the 2015 Japan Prize, will deliver the Presidential Symposium plenary lecture at the American Society of Gene and Cell Therapy's (ASGCT) upcoming Annual Meeting in Washington, DC on May 6, 2016. The Presidential Symposium will represent the first time Drs. Fischer and Friedmann will speak in the U.S. after being presented as laureates of the 2015 Japan Prize.

The Japan Prize is a prestigious international award honoring laureates whose “original and outstanding achievements in science and technology have advanced the frontiers of knowledge and served the cause of peace and prosperity for mankind.” Since its inception in 1985, 83 laureates from 13 countries have received the Japan Prize in a variety of fields and disciplines and this award has many times served as a precursor for the Nobel Prize.

A pediatrician-turned-researcher at UC San Diego, Dr. Theodore Friedmann is renowned for demonstrating in the lab that it is possible to correct a genetic defect by adding a functional gene to defective cells, a feat he and colleagues accomplished in 1968. Since then, Friedmann has been nicknamed the “Father of Gene Therapy” and has been actively involved in advocating for gene therapy and being at the forefront of ethical issues.

Dr. Alain Fischer, Director of Immunology at the Necker Hospital in Paris, France, is credited with being the first to clinically prove the effectiveness of gene therapy by successfully treating children suffering from a fatal genetic disease using hematopoietic stem cell gene therapy. In 2000, the announcement of Dr. Fischer’s clinical success helped the field of gene therapy gain widespread recognition and momentum.

“This great honor of the Japan Prize recognizes two scientists and thinkers who conceptualized gene transfer for the treatment of monogenic genetic disorders. Their seminal studies on Lesch-Nyhan syndrome and X-linked severe combined immune deficiency paved the way for the wave of successful gene therapy trials we are seeing today,” said Michel Sadelain, President of ASGCT. “Their vision, courage and integrity are shining examples for all of us.”

Drs. Fischer and Theodore will present their highly anticipated Presidential Symposium plenary lectures at ASGCT’s 19th Annual Meeting, taking place from 1:15pm to 3:15pm on Friday, May 6, 2016, at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, DC.

The American Society of Gene & Cell Therapy (ASGCT) is a professional nonprofit medical and scientific organization dedicated to the understanding, development and application of genetic and cellular therapies and the promotion of professional and public education in the field. For more information on ASGCT, visit its website, www.asgct.org.

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