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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LA JOLLA, March 11 -- The Lupus Foundation of America has awarded its annual Distinguished Service Award to Dr. Frank J. Dixon, director emeritus of the Research Institute of Scripps Clinic.

The award, given in recognition of Dixon's basic research of autoimmune diseases, particularly systemic lupus erythematosus, was presented today at Scripps Clinic by Dr. Sheldon Cohen, associate director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease.

First as pathology department chairman at the University of Pittsburgh and, for 25 years, as chairman of the Research Institute of Scripps Clinic, "Dr. Dixon played a pivotal role in developing and establishing immunopathology as a field of study," said Dr. Evie Dennis, Lupus Foundation president. "His studies on lupus have been at the cutting edge of immunological science."

An immunologist and expert in viral infections, Dixon is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and numerous professional organizations; his research has covered a wide variety of human disorders.
"Especially important has been his development of experimental models of lupus," said Dennis. "They have produced both an increased understanding of the immunopathogenesis of lupus and served as the basis for protocols for other investigators to pursue an array of experimental approaches in this area of study."

Dixon received his medical degree from the University of Minnesota and, after 10 years at the University of Pittsburgh, joined Scripps Clinic in 1961. Under his leadership, the research branch of Scripps Clinic grew from a staff of 32 to more than 1,000, with an annual research budget of $60 million.

He has received 14 medical and scientific awards, including the Gairdner Foundation International Award, the Albert Lasker Medical Research Award and the Rous-Whipple Award of the American Association of Pathologists. Through his research and membership on numerous journal editorial boards and medical society advisory committees, Dixon has always had close ties with such national organizations as the Lupus Foundation.

Founded in 1977, the foundation is the major voluntary health organization in the United States devoted to the fight against lupus, an autoimmune disease of unknown cause that affects more than 500,000 Americans. It has 100 chapters, including one in San Diego.

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