Scripps Clinic researcher receives award from Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center

LA JOLLA, June 29 — University City resident Frank Huennekens, Ph.D., division of biochemistry, Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation, has received the C. Chester Stock Medal from Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

The award, given annually for outstanding research achievement in cancer chemotherapy, was presented last month during a symposium on "Frontiers of Cancer Research," held in conjunction with the dedication ceremony of the new Rockefeller Research Laboratory Building at Sloan-Kettering.

Huennekens was honored for studies on methotrexate, a drug used extensively in cancer chemotherapy. He and his colleagues were responsible for identifying the enzyme dihydrofolate reductase as the site for drug action within tumor cells. They also showed that an elevated level of the enzyme is responsible for tumors becoming resistant to drug treatment. Currently, Huennekens' research group is investigating a new therapeutic approach in which an inert form of the drug may become activated by enzymes in the vicinity of tumors.

(More)
Founder of the Scripps Clinic biochemistry division, Huennekens served as its chairman for 22 years. He is also an adjunct professor in both the chemistry and biology departments at the University of California, San Diego, and is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Previously, Huennekens received the Paul-Levris Award in Enzyme Chemistry from the American Chemical Society. He also holds an Outstanding Investigator Grant from the National Cancer Institute. The Institute, along with the American Cancer Society, has supported Huennekens' research efforts for more than 30 years. He serves on the Board of Scientific Counselors at the National Cancer Institute and on the Council for Research and Clinical Investigation at the American Cancer Society.

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