NEW CELL BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT
ANNOUNCED AT RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF SCRIPPS CLINIC

LA JOLLA, CALIF. May 29, 1991 -- On July 1, the Research Institute of Scripps Clinic will add a new Department of Cell Biology as an extension of the institute's strength in integrating cellular and molecular biology with chemical and structural determinations, according to department chairman Norton B. Gilula, Ph.D.

"Cell biology is the cornerstone of contemporary medicine," Gilula says. "The basic framework for understanding bodily function now begins at the level of single cells. In medicine today, this has become the starting point for understanding normal physiology as well as pathologies associated with human function."

The Department of Cell Biology will house contemporary research activities in cellular and molecular biology, with a strong emphasis in relating structures in cells and viruses to their functions. Additional departments within the Research Institute include chemistry, immunology, molecular biology, molecular and experimental medicine, and neuropharmacology.

Several eminent scientists have already been recruited for the Department of Cell Biology:

Joining the faculty July 1 will be Sydney Brenner, Ph.D.,
director of the Molecular Genetics Unit, Medical Research Council, Cambridge, England. He will be a visiting member of the department and will spend time each year in both La Jolla and England.

Brenner is known throughout the world for his pioneering work on the structure and function of genes and is one of the premier contributors to solving the key puzzles of how DNA encodes genetic information and then expresses that information to form proteins in the complex processes by which new living material is developed. His studies laid the foundation for many of today's basic genetic concepts well in advance of the techniques of modern molecular biology that allow individual genes to be isolated by cloning.

Brenner earned his doctorate from Oxford University in 1954 and has served as a member of the scientific staff of the Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge since 1957. His research accomplishments have been internationally recognized with awards, honorary degrees and election to scientific honorary societies, including the Royal Society and the U.S. National Academy of Science.

Another recruit from the Molecular Genetics Unit in Cambridge is Ichiro Maruyama, Ph.D., who will also join the new department July 1. He is best known for his developmental genetics analysis of the nematode Caenorhabditis elegans.

Maruyama received his doctorate in 1981 from the University of Tokyo and did postgraduate work at the Japanese National Institute of Genetics before coming to the Cambridge, England Medical Research Council in 1983.

Roger Beachy, Ph.D., a plant biologist renowned for his work...
in developing genetic engineering techniques to make plants more resistant to disease caused by viruses, will join the department in July as head of a division of plant biology. He is currently the director of plant biotechnology at Washington University, St. Louis.

Stephen B.H. Kent, Ph.D., a protein chemist best known for the preparation by total synthesis of one of the enzymes essential for the replication of the AIDS virus, joined the Research Institute in January.

The new department chairman, Gilula, also serves as the Research Institute’s dean of graduate studies and has been a member of the Department of Molecular Biology since 1986; prior to that he was a professor of cell biology at Baylor College of Medicine. Since 1983, Gilula has been editor of the Journal of Cell Biology, and since 1989 the editor of Current Opinion in Cell Biology. In past years, he has served on the editorial boards of Developmental Biology, Molecular and Cellular Biology, and the Journal of Neurocytology.

At the Feb. 18 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Gilula was elected to the rank of Fellow of the AAAS and was presented a citation that commended his "studies on the nature and function of intercellular junctions."

Gilula received his Ph.D. in physiology from the University of California, Berkeley, and bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Southern Illinois University. He was a research fellow at Harvard Medical School, did postdoctoral work at The Rockefeller University, then was an assistant and associate professor of cell
biology at Rockefeller. He joined the faculty of Baylor College of Medicine in 1981.

His additional past positions have included chairmanship of the Biological Sciences Section of the New York Academy of Sciences, a council member of the American Society for Cell Biology, chairman of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Molecular Biology Study Section, a member of the National Research Council's Panel on Cell Biology and the NIGMS National Advisory Council of the NIH.

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