RESEARCHER AT THE SCRIPPS RESEARCH INSTITUTE
RECIPIENT OF PRESTIGIOUS NIH AWARD

LA JOLLA, CALIF., May 3, 1993 -- Ernest Beutler, M.D., chairman of the Department of Molecular and Experimental Medicine at The Scripps Research Institute and principal investigator of the Scripps Clinic General Clinical Research Center (GCRC), has been selected to receive the General Clinical Research Centers Fifth Annual Award for Excellence in Clinical Research.

The award will be granted today at the national meeting of the American Society for Clinical Investigation in Washington, D.C., where Beutler will give a lecture and receive a $5,000 award and plaque.

The honor, awarded by the National Center for Research Resources of the National Institutes of Health, acknowledges outstanding clinical research conducted in a GCRC. A GCRC is a research center within a major teaching hospital that conducts innovative patient studies to test new therapies and treatments. Each GCRC has highly trained nurses, dietitians and biostatisticians, advanced computer systems and state-of-the-art equipment. Clinical investigators who have conducted research in the past seven

MORE
years at a GCRC are nominated for the award. An anonymous peer review committee then selects the award winner on the basis of scientific merit and utilization of the GCRC.

Beutler has worked with the GCRC at Scripps Clinic since joining Scripps in 1978. Founded in 1974, Scripps Clinic’s GCRC is the only one of the 75 NCRR-funded centers which is not affiliated with a university or medical school.

"Dr. Beutler has made important contributions to our understanding of disease mechanisms and to improved treatment modalities in several areas of hematological diseases and in oncology," says Eng M. Tan, M.D., director of the Autoimmune Disease Center at Scripps Clinic and chairman of the GCRC Scientific Advisory Committee which nominated Beutler for the award.

Beutler’s selection was based on his pioneering work in the fields of anemia, lipid storage disorders (particularly Gaucher disease), and the use of 2-Chlorodeoxyadenosine (2-CdA) in the treatment of lymphomas and leukemia.

Beutler has authored or co-authored hundreds of papers during the course of his career. Beutler’s lab succeeded in cloning the cDNA and gene for glucocerebrosidase, the enzyme that is deficient in Gaucher disease. In December of 1991, Beutler was the lead author of a paper concerning the discovery of a gene mutation that plays a role in Gaucher disease. Such research had important implications concerning screening for couples at risk for having a baby with Gaucher disease.
With the advent of enzyme replacement therapy and availability of glucocerebrosidase, Beutler and his colleagues have studied the response of patients to different dose schedules of aglucerase, the commercially-available recombinant enzyme. It is now well documented from their study and those of others, that successful treatment of adult Gaucher disease can be accomplished and at a much lower cost than was previously believed.

Beutler led the team that tested the new anti-cancer drug, 2-CdA, developed at The Scripps Research Institute by Dennis Carson, M.D. It has produced a large number of complete remissions in hairy cell leukemia patients and in patients with other diseases.

"Beutler is acknowledged to be the driving force behind studies conducted in the GCRC to determine the therapeutic potential of 2-CdA in patients with leukemias, lymphomas and autoimmune disease" says Tan. "He is a first class clinician-scientist and exemplifies the excellence that would be expected of a GCRC clinical research awardee."

After receiving his medical degree from the University of Chicago in 1950, Beutler spent four years on the school's faculty. He then moved to the City of Hope Medical Center in Duarte, Calif., where he was chairman of the division of medicine and director of the department of hematology. Beutler was also a clinical professor of medicine at the University of Southern California until 1978 when he joined Scripps Clinic. He is also currently a clinical professor of medicine at the University of
California, San Diego.

The four previous recipients of the NIH award include researchers from Harvard University, University of Washington, Duke University and Rockefeller University.

###