Scripps Scientist Awarded Grant for Educational Fellowships in Chemistry

La Jolla, CA. July 21, 1993 — K.C. Nicolaou, Ph.D., Chairman of the Chemistry Department and Darlene Shiley Professor at The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI), has received a grant for the support of educational fellowships in the field of chemistry from the Glaxo Research Institute, a division of Glaxo, Inc., in North Carolina.

The $250,000 award, the largest ever granted by the organization for education in chemistry, will support predoctoral and postdoctoral fellowships for a period of one year.

According to Peter Myers, Ph.D., Vice President of Research Chemistry at Glaxo, "We are most impressed by the superb quality and stature that the Department of Chemistry at The Scripps Research Institute has attained in a relatively short period of time. The Institute pays great homage to chemistry as a discipline and is now one of this country's renowned proving grounds in this area of investigative research."

Nicolaou, who is internationally recognized for his work on the synthesis of medically important compounds, will be responsible for selecting superior candidates for the

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fellowships from among the laboratories of senior chemists in the department. "This is a wonderful gift that will go a long way in training young men and women in the chemical sciences and at the same time advance our knowledge in biomedical research," he said. "It also underscores Glaxo's commitment to higher education and to support basic research at selected centers of excellence."

Since his appointment to the staff of TSRI in 1989, Nicolaou designed and synthesized a new class of molecules that represents some of the most potent anti-cancer agents ever tested. Called enediynes, the molecules have shown "remarkable selectivity" in their ability to destroy cancer cells while leaving certain healthy cells intact.

More recently, he led a team of scientists in synthesizing rapamycin, a biologically significant molecule under investigation for its ability to suppress the immune system for organ transplantation. Seen as a promising alternative to cyclosporin, the only immunosuppressant drug available today to prevent rejection from transplantation, rapamycin is one of the most complex molecules to ever be synthesized.

Nicolaou also is engaged in research on the synthesis of taxol, a natural product extracted from the bark of the Pacific Yew tree that recently has been approved for the treatment of breast and ovarian cancer.

He earned his bachelor's degree in 1969 at Bedford College and his Ph.D. in 1972 at University College, both part of the University of London. From 1972 to 1976 he held research associate positions at Columbia and Harvard Universities. From 1976 until his appointment at Scripps, Nicolaou served as the Rhodes-Thompson Professor of Chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania. During his tenure at Penn, he was
awarded an A.P. Sloan Fellowship and a J.S. Guggenheim Fellowship. Concurrent with his position at TSRI, he also serves as professor of chemistry at University of California, San Diego.

He is the recipient of numerous other awards and honors, including the Humboldt Foundation U.S. Senior Scientist Award, the Camille and Henry Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar Award, the A.C. Cope Scholar Award from the American Chemical Society, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Award, and the American Cancer Society Award for Creative Work in Synthetic Organic Chemistry. Nicolaou has published more than 280 scientific articles.

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