USC microbiologist Jae Jung awarded Ho-Am Prize in Medicine

Jae Jung, Fletcher Jones Foundation Chair and Hastings Foundation Professor of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, has been awarded South Korea’s 2012 Ho-Am Prize in Medicine, an honor that is often referred to as the Korean equivalent of the Nobel Prize.

Jung, who also is director of the USC Institute of Emerging Pathogens and Immune Diseases, was recognized as a leading authority in molecular biology whose discoveries have laid the groundwork for eventual cures for virus-induced cancers. He is one of five prize recipients from around the globe who will be honored at a June 1 ceremony in Seoul, South Korea, where he will deliver a commemorative lecture. The award consists of a 6 oz. gold medal, a laureate diploma and 300 million Korean won (approximately $265,000).

“As a recipient of the prestigious Ho-Am Prize in Medicine, one of Korea’s highest honors, Professor Jung sets the bar for excellence in cutting-edge research not just at USC, but across our global community of medical scientists,” said USC Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Elizabeth Garrett.

Jung’s innovative work in molecular biology provides a foundation for curing certain cancers, insuring the promise of greater health and well-being for countless people around the world.”

Jung, recruited to lead the USC Department of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology from Harvard Medical School in 2007, is regarded as a preeminent expert in the molecular biology of gamma-herpesviruses and their gene products as they relate to cell biology, biochemistry and immunology. He began looking at the virus strain in 1990, when it was known to cause cancer in animals. By 1994, researchers had discovered that a human form of the virus caused Kaposi’s sarcoma, the most common cancer among AIDS patients. Already well versed on the animal form of the virus, Jung began studying the human version.

“This research has the potential to help so many people,” Jung said. “Our team at USC has an expertize in infectious disease—we study how and why people get sick so that we can find a way to cure them. I was at Harvard Medical School for 19 years, but I came to the Keck School of Medicine of USC because I wanted to contribute to public health in a more direct way—I think that is what the Ho-Am Prize Committee is recognizing with this prize. And I am truly humbled.”

Under Jung’s leadership, the USC Molecular Microbiology and Immunology Department has more than doubled in size to 22 faculty members while its annual grant portfolio has grown eight-fold. Jung sits on grant review panels for the National Institutes of Health, American Cancer Society, and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of America. With more than 145 published scientific papers, Jung also serves as an editor and reviewer for respected journals such as

Three USC students awarded Schweitzer Fellowships for community outreach

By Gabrielle Olya

Students from the School of Pharmacy and the Keck School of Medicine are recognized for their community outreach projects.

This year, Joy Yue Wang and Amanda Wong of the School of Pharmacy and Patricia Martinez of the Keck School of Medicine were among only 250 recipients nationwide of the 2012-13 Albert Schweitzer Fellowships.

The fellowships are granted to graduate students in the fields of medicine, public health and pharmacy who are committed to serving their local community.

Wang will use her funding toward a 12-week smoking cessation program to help people quit smoking through physiological and behavioral modification, which will take place at a local safety-net clinic, where it will reach those most in need of this service.

“The Schweitzer Fellowship encourages fellows to explore avenues to sustain our projects beyond our time as fellows,” said Wang. “I think that it is very exciting to have the opportunity to start something new for our community and see its growth and impact throughout the years.”

Wong will use the funding for the L.A. County Braille Project, which will provide medication reviews and educational sessions for the blind and visually impaired.

“I’m excited to establish a brand new partnership with the Braille Institute, while also providing opportunities for our pharmacists and students to serve in different patient care situations,” said Wong.

Martinez’s project will pair a motivated first- or second-year medical student with a community clinic patient living with a chronic illness, such as diabetes.

“I hope the project can both educate and empower the patients involved in this project, and also prepare future physicians to be more culturally sensitive and therefore better advocates for their patients,” explained Martinez.

Upon completion of their initial year as fellows, the winners will become Schweitzer Fellows for Life, joining a network of over 2,000 Schweitzer alumni who are skilled in and committed to addressing the health needs of underserved people throughout their careers as professionals.

CONTINUING EDUCATION COUNTS—The USC Anaulos Education Department hosted in March its first Critical Care Symposium for nurses and its first Nurse Skills program. The symposium engaged nearly 135 nurses in the latest advancements in critical care. The department also hosted a nurse skills program, providing lessons on IV pump programming and other technical nursing techniques. Both events were part of efforts by the Education Department to offer continuing education to help advance medical center clinicians. Left, symposium speaker Carol Jacobson discusses tachycardia before a crowd of registered nurses. Above, Keck Medical Center of USC clinical care educator Town Kirkpatrick talks to nurses about cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
Trojan League benefit focuses on global health challenges

By Ina Fried

An inflatable globe, ordered on Amazon.com from a company in Rhode Island but manufactured in China, illustrated global interconnectedness during the keynote speech about global health at a Trojan League of Los Angeles benefit on the Health Sciences campus March 24.

More than 200 USC alumnas and other supporters attended the day-long event, which benefitted the Keck School of Medicine of USC. Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito welcomed the group, which met on the Health Sciences campus for the first time in more than 20 years.

According to keynote speaker Jonathan Samet, "Global health is public health for the planet." Samet, director of the USC Institute for Global Health and the Flora L. Thornton Chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine in the Keck School of Medicine, highlighted three types of global health concerns:

- Problems that reach globally and remind us how connected we all are, such as HIV/AIDS and West Nile virus;
- Problems spread by globalization, such as diseases caused by smoking; and
- Problems that need global solutions, in which we all need to work together, such as pollution of the oceans and the atmosphere.

Outlining briefly a variety of USC educational and research programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, Samet said, "Young people are very concerned about the future of our planet. Our students want to be involved and engaged in finding solutions."

Optimism about the future of health and health care was a recurring theme among speakers. Heinz-Josef Lenz, co-director of the USC Center for Molecular Pathways and Drug Discovery and co-leader of the Gastrointestinal Cancers Program at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, described research that coaxes colon cancer stem cells out of hiding so that the cancer can be cured. "We are conducting the first human clinical trials ever, and we see exactly what we were hoping for," he said.

"The applications of the technology to isolate and capture diseased stem cells are not limited to cancer," he said, but may help patients with such diverse diseases as cardiovascular disease and multiple sclerosis.

Paula Cannon, associate professor of molecular microbiology and immunology, biochemistry and molecular biology, and pediatrics, described a stem cell approach to cancer treatment. "My vision is to get away from drugs and get to a one-shot stem cell therapy," she said. Predicting clinical trials by the end of the decade and possibly two years, Cannon said, "We’re going to try to go in and fix what’s wrong. I see no way it won’t be the future of medicine. The potential for this field of medicine is huge."

Founded on March 25, 1958, the Trojan League of Los Angeles fosters continuing interest in USC. Each year the organization sponsors a benefit showcasing a department, school, program or individual of renown at the university. President Marilyn Kriestan introduced the program. Chairs for this year’s benefit were Fran Cuilla and Marilyn Kriestan.

JUNG: Leader in microbiology receives prestigious South Korean honor for scientific contributions

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"Jae Jung is an exceptional scholar, leader and teacher whose contributions to the health of society are immeasurable," said Carmen A. Puliafito, dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC. "His buoyant personality and passion for science are plain to see, and we are honored to celebrate with him this recognition that he richly deserves."

A native of Seoul, Jung earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Seoul National University. He moved to the United States in 1985 and earned his Ph.D. in microbiology at the University of California, Davis, four years later. Jung completed postdoctoral training at Harvard’s New England Regional Primate Research Center. He eventually served as chair of the division of tumor virology at the research center and became the first Korean-born scientist to be promoted to a tenured professorship at Harvard.

The Ho-Am Prize was established in 1990 by Samsung, posthumously named after the South Korean conglomerate’s founder, “Ho-Am” Byung-Chull Lee. It is awarded annually to Koreans in Korea and abroad who make major contributions to science, the arts, social development and human welfare through remarkable achievements.

For more information, visit http://hoamprize.samsungfoundation.org/eng.

CHLA hires noted pediatric neuropathologist

By Ellen Kavanagh

Pediatric neuropathologist Dr. Tian, has accepted an appointment with the Children’s Hospital Los Angeles’ Department of Pathology and the Laboratory Medicine and the Developmental Neuroscience Program at The Saban Research Institute.

Alexander R. Judkins, CHLA pathologist-in-chief and associate professor of clinical pathology at the Keck School of Medicine, called Tian a physician-scientist who has developed a unique set of skills that allow him to diagnose the problems of the developing brain as a pediatric neuropathologist and to discover their origins as a developmental neuroscientist. "Tian, who is assistant professor of pathology at the Keck School, combines expertise in genetics with the ability to develop in vivo models for autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders.

Tian received his medical training at Beijing Medical University, Beijing, China, and his doctorate in Neuroscience, Cell and Molecular Biology from Northwestern University in Chicago.

He completed his residency in Anatomical Pathology, and served as a Clinical Fellow in Neuropathology in the C. S. Kulkib Labortary for Neuropathology, all in the Department of Pathology, Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School.

He went completed postdoctoral training in genetics in the laboratory of Jeannie T. Lee in the Department of Molecular Biology, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Department of Genetics, Harvard Medical School.

Since 2008, Tian has been a research fellow in the laboratory of Mark F. Bear at The Picower Institute for Learning and Memory, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Beginning in 2009, Tian has been an assistant in pathology at the Massachusetts General Hospital and an instructor in pathology at the Harvard Medical School.
This year’s Los Angeles Times Festival of Books at the University of Southern California runs April 21-22 at the University Park campus.

Highlights include a 10:45 a.m. discussion on April 21 with David Agus, professor of medicine and engineering at the Keck School and the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, about The End of Illness. The event will be at Hoffman Hall.

Also on April 21, at the USC Stage, Mel Benton, USC School of Pharmacy associate professor, will host a 12:50 p.m. theatrical performance of the fotonovela Rose Out of Control, which focuses on obesity.

The festival will feature a Health Pavilion with demonstrations and health screenings. The pavilion’s schedule is as follows:
- Saturday, April 21
  - 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Mobile Dental Clinic—The Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC offers free dental screenings and education for the whole family.
  - 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. How clean is “clean?”—Calling all germaphobes! Test your infection prevention knowledge and hand washing techniques (under a revealing black light) as the Keck Medical Center of USC Hospital Infection Prevention and Control unit demonstrates effective hand washing and invites participants to play the “wheel of questions” health safety game.
  - 12:30 p.m. – 2 p.m. Health Check—Going on a trip? Looking for tips on quitting smoking? The USC School of Pharmacy is providing information on these areas and more, including screenings for diabetes, blood pressure and body fat analysis; as well as “brown bag” checks to help you evaluate your medications; health education; and prevention crafts for kids.
  - 12:30 p.m. – 2 p.m. Fit Families Program—Parents and children are invited to learn about exercise, wellness and nutrition, courtesy of the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy. Activities include body composition testing, stretching/yoga participation demonstrations, cardio exercise and discussion of healthy snacks.
- Sunday, April 22
  - 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Mobile Dental Clinic—The Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC offers free dental screenings and education for the whole family.
- 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Oxygen Check—Pulse oximetry (measures heart rate and oxygen saturation) and sleep health questionnaires, courtesy of the Keck Medical Center of USC Respiratory/Pulmonary Diagnostic Services unit.
- 12:30 p.m. – 2 p.m. Health Check—Screenings for A1C levels, glucose levels and blood pressure, courtesy of the Keck Medical Center of USC Department of Internal Medicine.
- 3 p.m. – 5 p.m. Health Check—Screenings for A1C levels, glucose levels and blood pressure, courtesy of the Keck Medical Center of USC Department of Internal Medicine.

Ticket information

While Festival of Books admission and most Festival activities are free, tickets are required for all indoor panels. Panel tickers will be $5 each for all daytime panels, $10 for any evening panel, and $20 for a festival ticket that will allow you to attend any indoor session or event throughout the day. Tickets are available beginning April 15 at 10 a.m.

Special events

The festival will begin at 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Saturday, April 21 and 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Sunday, April 22. The festival will conclude with a Health Pavilion on Sunday, April 22.

The USC School of Pharmacy will provide free screenings for the whole family, including diabetes, heart disease, nutrition and wellness. The Healthy Kids and Teens area will provide hands-on activities for children and teens. The Healthy Schools area will offer health education and activities for families. The Healthy Men and Women area will offer health education and activities for adults.

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The dean also emphasized the need for student scholarships. “Scholarships for our medical students are a high priority in the recently launched Keck Medicine fundraising initiative. It is our school’s desire to make more scholarships available to help alleviate the rising costs of a medical education.”

The afternoon began with a welcome reception held in the lobby of Mayer Auditorium and a program featuring lectures by faculty, discussions on student experiences with students and tours of the Health Sciences campus. Parents laughed at the answer to the question about what they can do to be supportive of medical students undergoing stressful exams: “Send food—and money.”

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