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## **THREE WINNERS OF NEW AWARD FOR YOUNGER RESEARCHERS ANNOUNCED BY COALITION OF ALZHEIMER ORGANIZATIONS**

### **- Annual Awards Support "Tomorrow's Leaders in Alzheimer's Disease Research;" Honor Legacies of Drs. George Glenner and Leon Thal -**

April 9, 2008 – A coalition of leading Alzheimer's disease organizations today announced the first three recipients of "Tomorrow's Leaders in Alzheimer's Disease Research" prizes; a new award mechanism to recognize outstanding young scientists in Alzheimer's and dementia research.

The three winners are:

- Sterling C. Johnson, Ph.D. – Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, Madison, Wisconsin, and Research Scientist, GRECC, William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital, Madison. His research uses brain imaging in conjunction with neuropsychological measurement to study cognitive disorders of memory and self-awareness.
- Dora Marta Kovacs, Ph.D. – Associate Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, and Associate Neuroscientist, Neurology Service, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston. Her research focuses on the molecular events underlying neurodegeneration in Alzheimer's disease.
- James J. Lah, M.D., Ph.D. – Associate Professor in the Department of Neurology, Clinical Core Leader of the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, and Investigator in the Center for Neurodegenerative Disease at Emory University School of Medicine, Atlanta, Georgia. His research is driven by the goal of understanding basic, disease-causing mechanisms to improve the care of individuals with neurodegenerative disorders.

Tomorrow's Leaders in Alzheimer's Disease Research awards, worth \$100,000.00 each, recognize and encourage outstanding new M.D. or Ph.D. Alzheimer's disease investigators who have made pivotal contributions to early detection, treatment, and prevention of Alzheimer's. The new prizes honor the legacies of two pioneering Alzheimer's disease researchers – George G. Glenner, M.D., and Leon J. Thal, M.D.

The sponsoring organizations are the Cure Alzheimer's Fund, the Alzheimer's Association, and the Lou Ruvo Brain Institute, who each have committed \$100,000 annually to fund the prizes. The awards will be officially presented on May 14 at the Alzheimer's Association National Gala in Washington D.C.

The prize funds may be used for any purpose at the discretion of each recipient. The sponsors expect to award prizes each year to recognize additional, well-qualified, outstanding investigators. More information about the Tomorrow's Leaders in Alzheimer's Disease Research awards, nomination procedures and deadlines is available on the websites of the three sponsoring organizations.

“The Alzheimer's Association is very excited to be part of the creation of another innovative vehicle for funding young scientists,” said William Thies, PhD, vice president for Medical & Scientific Relations at the Alzheimer's Association. “Alzheimer's disease is the 21st century's health epidemic, and the only way to successfully combat Alzheimer's is to accelerate the investment in research.”

“The award honors extraordinary current achievement and outstanding potential for future discoveries,” said Tim Armour, President and CEO, Cure Alzheimer's Fund. “It is a unique award in this field that we hope will both reward and inspire the most innovative researchers to continue their focus on Alzheimer's research as a career path.”

“During the last three decades, some of the most critical advances in Alzheimer's research were made by unconventional thinkers or new investigators in dementia research. This award aims to

foster investigators exploring ideas beyond the boundaries of prevailing scientific orthodoxies,” said Zaven Khachaturian, Ph.D., President of the Lou Ruvo Brain Institute. “We anticipate that the award will grow into a major vehicle for recognizing scientific achievement, creativity and vision in the Alzheimer’s research field.”

### Honoring Drs. Thal and Glenner

Thal (1944–2007), a visionary in conceptualizing and designing Alzheimer clinical studies, led an unparalleled clinical research effort, including some of the trials that established the most important current symptomatic treatments. Since 1994, Thal headed the Alzheimer’s Disease Cooperative Study (ADCS), an 80-site clinical research consortium in the United States and Canada. He also directed the University of California at San Diego’s Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer’s Disease Center, established in 1984 as one of the original five centers funded by the National Institute on Aging. In addition, he chaired UCSD’s Department of Neurosciences.

Glenner (1928–1995) headed the molecular pathology section and chaired the Department of Medicine and Physiology at the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences at the National Institutes of Health from 1958 to 1980. In 1982, he assumed a post as research pathologist in the University of California at San Diego School of Medicine. Two years later, Glenner and his assistant, Cai’ne Wong, announced the isolation and identification of beta-amyloid and its connection with Alzheimer’s. Their watershed research set the cornerstone for the amyloid hypothesis, the leading theoretical framework for understanding Alzheimer’s and the basis of the most promising emerging “disease-modifying” treatments.

“In all their various roles, Leon Thal and George Glenner were celebrated as collaborators, consensus-builders and mentors,” said Harry Johns, President and CEO, Alzheimer’s Association. “To honor this collegial spirit, an organizing principle of the Tomorrow’s Leaders in Alzheimer’s Disease Research Prize is collaboration among sponsoring institutions.”

### About the Sponsoring Organizations

The Lou Ruvo Brain Institute (LRBI), a non-profit, 501c(3) public charity, seeks to accelerate the discovery of cures for memory disorders and dementia associated with diseases such as Alzheimer’s, Huntington’s, Parkinson’s, and ALS. The Institute fosters the creation of worldwide cooperative research networks to develop new detection technologies for early and accurate diagnosis of dementia and facilitate the development of treatments for various forms of memory impairments. The LRBI aims to build a unique national research resource to accelerate the process of testing new interventions. Please visit [www.keepmemoryalive.org](http://www.keepmemoryalive.org).

Cure Alzheimer's Fund TM is a 501c3 public charity whose mission is to fund research with the highest probability of slowing, stopping or reversing Alzheimer's disease. Cure Alzheimer’s Fund is characterized by a venture approach to philanthropy in which all expenses and overhead is paid for by its founders and all contributions go directly to research. The Foundation has no financial or intellectual property interest in the research funded, and will make known the results

of all funded research as soon as possible. Cure Alzheimer's Fund is a national organization with offices in Boston and Pittsburgh. Please visit [www.curealzfund.org](http://www.curealzfund.org).

The Alzheimer's Association is the first and largest voluntary health organization dedicated to finding prevention methods, treatments and an eventual cure for Alzheimer's. Since its founding in 1980, the Association has awarded more than \$200 million in research grants. For more than 25 years, the Association has provided reliable information and care consultation; created services for families; increased funding for dementia research; and influenced public policy changes. Please visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).

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