

November 16, 2012 | By Scott LaFee

## Napoleone Ferrara Awarded The Economist's 2012 Innovation Award for Bioscience



Ferrara, MD, PhD

Napoleone Ferrara, MD, PhD, the molecular biologist credited with helping decipher how tumors grow, and with development of new treatments for both cancer and age-related macular degeneration, has been named recipient of *The Economist* magazine's 2012 Innovation Award for bioscience.

Ferrara, 56, joins the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine on December 1 as a professor of pathology and as senior deputy director for basic science at the UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center. He comes from Genentech, the San Francisco-based biotechnology company where he served as a long-time research fellow.

The Innovation prize in bioscience honors Ferrara's work identifying the role of the human VEGF gene in promoting angiogenesis – the formation of new blood vessels that can feed tumor growth – and subsequent development of two major monoclonal antibody drugs: Bevacizumab (marketed as Avastin), which is used to treat multiple forms of cancer, including breast, brain and colorectal, and ranibizumab (marketed as Lucentis), which treats wet age-related macular degeneration, a leading cause of blindness in the elderly.

“Not only did he help explain how tumors proliferate through angiogenesis,” said Scott Lippman, MD, director of the UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center. “He took this new knowledge and translated it into novel clinical treatments that benefit real patients. We're thrilled to bring his vision, passion and commitment for truly collaborative scientific discovery and clinical progress to Moores.”

At UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center, Ferrara will continue his cancer drug development research targeting angiogenesis and oversee the center's basic science operation.

In 2010, Ferrara received the highly regarded Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Medical Research award for his work. Winners of Lasker awards have also won Nobel Prizes, as have several Economist Innovation recipients. Previous Innovation award winners in bioscience include artificial skin inventor Robert Langer, Harald zur Hausen, the Nobel Laureate who discovered the viral cause of cervical cancer, and J. Craig Venter, a pioneer in human genome sequencing and president of the J. Craig Venter Institute in La Jolla.

Now in their 11th year, *The Economist's* Innovation Awards celebrate individual innovators whose efforts have had great impact upon business and/or society. An international panel of 29 judges selected honorees in categories that include energy and the environment, computing and telecommunications, social and economic innovation and consumer products. The winners were announced at a London ceremony last night.

---

UC San Diego's [Studio Ten 300](#) offers radio and television connections for media interviews with our faculty, which can be coordinated via [studio@ucsd.edu](mailto:studio@ucsd.edu). To connect with a UC San Diego faculty expert on relevant issues and trending news stories, visit <https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/media-resources/faculty-experts>.