

UCSD Professor Deborah Spector Wins top YWCA Award

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Media contact: Warren Froelich, 534-8564 UCSD PROFESSOR WINS TOP YWCA AWARD

Deborah Spector, professor of biology at University of California, San Diego, and a leading researcher in the study of a herpes virus affecting thousands of newborn children, has been chosen as a TWIN Honoree by the Young Women's Christian Association.

She will receive a YWCA Tribute to Women and Industry Award at an Awards Luncheon June 16 in the San Diego Convention Center Ballroom.

The TWIN Honoree program was developed by YWCA at the national level to honor women who have made a significant contribution to industry in managerial, executive or professional roles.

Spector, a microbiologist, and her husband, Dr. Stephen Spector, a professor of pediatrics at UCSD, are among the nation's leading researchers into cytomegalovirus (CMV), a herpes virus that infects about 37,000 children each year in the United States.

She was the first to clone the genetic blueprint of the virus in the early 1980s. Her aim has been to learn more about its life cycle and how best to interrupt it.

CMV is a major cause of birth defects and poses a serious risk for individuals such as AIDS patients, whose immune system has been suppressed.

The Spectors have been involved in studying the virus since the 1970s.

Spector, who earned her Ph.D. in microbiology and cellular biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1975, joined the UCSD faculty in 1978.

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