

UCSD Professor Named President of American Society of Gene Therapy Theodore Friedmann also honored as distinguished graduate of the University of Pennsylvania

June 26, 2006

Debra Kain

Theodore Friedmann, M.D., Professor of Pediatrics and Director of the Center for Molecular Genetics at UCSD School of Medicine, has been named president of the American Society of Gene Therapy. He will preside over the next annual meeting of the ASGT, being held in Seattle in June 2007.

Friedmann has been a leader in the field of gene-based therapies for over more than three decades. He is widely credited for helping to bring the potential of this field to the forefront when he wrote a seminal paper called "Gene Therapy for Human Genetic Disease?" that appeared in the journal *Science* in 1972.

The ASGT, founded in 1996 is a professional non-profit medical and scientific organization with almost 3,000 members. ASGT is the largest medical professional organization representing researchers and scientists dedicated to discovering new gene therapies. Its official journal, *Molecular Therapy*, which publishes scientific papers in the areas of gene transfer, regulation and discovery, cell therapy, experimental models, correction of genetic and acquired diseases, and clinical trials.

Friedmann was also recently honored with a 2006 Distinguished Graduate Award from the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned his medical degree. John Reed, M.D., President of the Burnham Institute, is a fellow 2006 recipient of this award, and UCSD Vice Chancellor of Health Sciences, Edward W. Holmes, M.D., received this distinction in 2001.

"Dr. Friedmann has been a leading player in gene therapy for more than 30 years. He was one of the writers of what is considered a 'founding statement' on the field. As both an advocate and critic of gene therapy, he has asserted, 'Medicine needs this technology. It's not just a choice.' We are just as certain that medicine needs people of science of Ted Friedmann's caliber, and are proud to name him one of our Distinguished Graduates," said Arthur H. Rubenstein, MBBCh, Vice President for the Health System and Dean for the School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

Friedmann's expertise and research interests are in the development of model systems for human gene therapy, with techniques including gene isolation and characterization, constructions of viral vectors and in-vivo replacement of genetically altered cells. He received UCSD's Faculty Research Lecturer Award in 1984-85; a University of California, Chancellor's Associates Award for Excellence in Research, 1992; the H.C. Jacobæus Prize of the Nordic Research Committee and Nordic Insulin Foundation, Lund, Sweden, 1995; Cross of Honor for Science and the Arts, Republic of Austria, 1996; among other awards and honors.

Media Contacts: Debra Kain, 619-543-6163