

## Professor Recipient of Tourette Syndrome Association's Champion of Children Award

March 27, 2006

Debra Kain

On February 16, 2006, the national Tourette Syndrome Association, Inc. (TSA) held its 9th Annual Champion of Children Awards Dinner at the Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills, California. This year's honorees and recipients of the TSA Champion of Children Award included Dr. Neal R. Swerdlow, past Chairman of the TSA Scientific Advisory Board and Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California San Diego School (UCSD) of Medicine; Brian Webber, Managing Director and Head of Technology Investment Banking at UBS; and actress Jennifer Love Hewitt.

Co-chaired by Ken and Julie Moelis and Jeffrey Kramer and Victoria Holm Kramer, this year's dinner raised over \$1.8 million to support TSA's education, research and service to the Tourette Syndrome community.

Swerdlow was presented with the Champion of Children Award in honor of his serving for ten years as Chairman of the TSA Scientific Advisory Board. During Swerdlow's tenure as Chairman, the TSA evaluated more than 700 research applications, funded more than 150 full research studies, and initiated three international consortia that succeeded in obtaining more than \$15 million in support from the National Institutes of Health for TS research.

In remarks made at the dinner, TSA Chairman Monte Redman said, "...I think we all know that, in Neal's heart, the true award is the realization that through his dedication and unselfish giving of himself to our cause, the world is a much better place for all people living with Tourette Syndrome."

A UCSD professor since 1991, Swerdlow is director of the Psychiatry Clerkship and Electives Program at UCSD. He received both his M.D. and Ph.D. degrees from UCSD, where he also completed his Psychiatry Residency training and Board Certification. He has directed research programs in preclinical and clinical neuropharmacology, and has run clinical programs in the treatment of movement disorders and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD.) His research in both humans and animal models is aimed at understanding mechanisms that regulate the automatic inhibition of unwanted thoughts, sensations, movements and impulses. Inherited disturbances in these protective inhibitory brain mechanisms are thought to contribute to a number of neuropsychiatric disorders, including TS and OCD.

With the support and guidance of his wife, Nancy, and their children, Laurel, Ethan and Jaret, Swerdlow has earned over 15 competitive research grants from the National Institutes of Health, in addition to awards from a number of private research foundations. He was the recipient of the Joel Elkes International Award from the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology, among other national and international prizes in Neurosciences and Psychiatry. Swerdlow has authored more than 180 peer-reviewed research papers and 25 book chapters.

In accepting the award, Swerdlow said to the audience of supporters, "Almost everything we know about TS today can be traced directly to studies funded by your support to the TSA. The simplest questions - what is TS, how many people have it, and what happens to them over time - are questions that wouldn't have answers, if it weren't for the TSA."

Tourette Syndrome (TS) is an inherited neurobiological disorder marked by tics - involuntary, rapid, sudden movements or vocalizations that occur repeatedly in the same way. The syndrome occurs in people from all ethnic groups, with the average onset around seven years of age. Once viewed as a relatively rare disorder, more recent studies in community samples have shown that TS affects up to 1 out of 100 individuals, and commonly occurs together with two related conditions, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Attention Deficit Disorder.

Media Contact: Debra Kain, 619-543-6163.

