ALBERT B. SABIN GOLD MEDAL AWARD

2012
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INTRODUCTION
BY PETER J. HOTEZ, M.D., Ph.D.

The Albert B. Sabin Gold Medal is awarded annually by the Sabin Vaccine Institute to recognize individuals who have made extraordinary contributions in the field of vaccinology or a complementary field. Nominations are solicited from members of the scientific community, and from these noteworthy nominees, an honoree is recommended by the Sabin Gold Medal Selection Committee, composed of previous medal recipients and chaired by Maj. Gen. Philip K. Russell, M.D. (USA Ret).

The 2012 winner of the Albert B. Sabin Gold Medal was F. Marc LaForce, M.D., who led the incredible work to develop a new vaccine against epidemic meningitis in Africa.

The Sabin Gold Medal Award ceremony would not be possible without the support of our sponsors, to whom I want to express our deepest thanks. This past year they were the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Texas Children’s Hospital, Serum Institute of India, Ltd., Pfizer, Sanofi Pasteur and MedImmune. These organizations have been loyal partners and supporters of Sabin’s mission to reduce needless suffering from vaccine preventable diseases and neglected tropical diseases, and deserve our heartfelt thanks.

On the occasion of the Call for Nominations for the 2013 Albert B. Sabin Gold Medal Award, we offer this booklet as a commemorative of the 2012 Gold Medal event. We look forward to seeing you at the 2013 Gold Medal Award Ceremony, which will mark the 20th year we have bestowed the award!

Peter J. Hotez, M.D., Ph.D.
President, Sabin Vaccine Institute
Dr. LaForce directed the Meningitis Vaccine Project (MVP), a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded partnership between PATH and the World Health Organization (WHO) from 2001 to March 2012. The project succeeded in developing a new African vaccine against epidemic meningitis. More than 55 million Africans between the ages of 1 and 29 years have been vaccinated since the vaccine’s introduction in 2010.

As MVP director, Dr. LaForce oversaw the successful development, licensure and widespread introduction of the first internationally licensed vaccine specifically designed for and introduced in Africa. The vaccine provides long-lasting protection against sub-Saharan Africa’s most important cause of epidemic meningitis, a disease that kills 10 percent of those sickened and leaves more than 20 percent of survivors with severe and lifelong disabilities.

Responding to calls from African health officials for a long-term, affordable solution to epidemic meningitis, Dr. LaForce and his team pioneered an innovative vaccine-development model to produce a vaccine costing less than 50 cents a dose. Their collaboration with the Serum Institute of India, Ltd. and other partners enabled the team to make the vaccine at about one-tenth the US$700 million investment usually required to bring a new vaccine to market.

The vaccine was introduced in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in mass vaccination campaigns in December 2010. At the close of the meningitis epidemic season in June 2011, not a single case of meningitis A had been reported among those who received the vaccine. The vaccine was introduced in Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria in 2011, and it is expected to reach 320 million people in all 25 countries of Africa’s meningitis belt by 2016.

Before joining PATH, Dr. LaForce held academic and administrative positions at the University of Colorado and the University of Rochester Schools of Medicine. He also served on immunization advisory committees for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and for the American College of Physicians. From 1994 to 2001, he led the Steering Committee on Epidemiology and Field Research for WHO’s vaccine cluster and from 1998 to 2001, he was president of the Armed Forces Epidemiological Board.

Dr. LaForce received his medical degree from Seton Hall College of Medicine and Dentistry.
PAST HONOREES

For two decades, the Sabin Vaccine Institute has been a leader in vaccine research, development and advocacy to combat needless suffering from vaccine preventable and neglected tropical diseases. During this time, Sabin has been recognizing individuals who personify exemplary contributions to disease prevention through the development or use of vaccines.

1994: Donald A. Henderson, M.D., M.P.H.
1996: Joseph L. Melnick, Ph.D. (d.2001)
1997: Maurice R. Hilleman, Ph.D., DSc. (d.2005)

1998: Allen C. Steere, M.D.
2000: Ciro A. de Quadros, M.D., M.P.H.

2001: John B. Robbins, M.D.
2002: Stanley A. Plotkin, M.D.
2003: Samuel L. Katz, M.D.

2005: Albert Z. Kapikian, M.D.
2006: William H. Foege, M.D., M.P.H.
2007: Hilary Koprowski, M.D.
2008: Ruth S. Nussenzweig, M.D., Ph.D.

2009: Rino Rappuoli, Ph.D.
2010: John D. Clemens, M.D.
2011: Douglas R. Lowy, M.D.
2011: John T. Schiller, Ph.D.

2012: F. Marc LaForce, M.D.
ABOUT THE 2013 AWARD CEREMONY

The tradition will continue with the 2013 Gold Medal Award ceremony on April 23, 2013, which will also mark the 20th year that Sabin has bestowed the award. Plan to join us in downtown Baltimore to recognize the achievements of the 22nd recipient of the Albert B. Sabin Gold Medal.

The 2013 Albert B. Sabin Gold Medal Award Ceremony is a part of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) Annual Conference.