

## **Gold Medal 2013 Remarks**

### **Dr. Peter Hotez President, Sabin Vaccine Institute Remarks**

Good evening. Welcome everyone to the 20th Albert B. Sabin Gold Medal Award Ceremony. This coincides with the Sabin Vaccine Institute's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, as well. It's remarkable that in our history we have had the opportunity to recognize so many of the world's leading scientists and vaccinologists. Recipients of this award have been leaders in the critical work to develop and test vaccines that have helped to control, eliminate, and, in one case, eradicate the world's most devastating infections.

The Sabin Vaccine Institute was founded to honor and continue Dr. Albert Sabin's personal mission to reduce poverty and human suffering through public health initiatives. Dr. Sabin had a particular passion for giving children access to preventative medicine to ensure the next generation will be healthy and prosperous, and he was most well known for his work to develop the oral live polio virus vaccine. Tonight our Board Chair Mr. Mort Hyman sends his regrets that he could not be here, but he sends his very fondest wishes to our honorees and guests.

Today, Sabin carries this mission on through many well-known, international programs and initiatives.

Our Vaccine Advocacy and Education team, led by Dr. Ciro de Quadros (2000 Gold Medal recipient), works with partners around the world to increase access and promote awareness of underutilized vaccines – both traditional and new.

The Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases, led by Dr. Neeraj Mistry, works to raise the awareness, funding and political will needed to control and eliminate seven neglected tropical diseases. Our recent END7 Video, entitled "How to Shock a Celebrity" has been seen by over 200,000 people on YouTube – and is on the verge of becoming a biomedical Gangnam Style phenomenon! It is an incredibly moving piece on the suffering from NTDs and what we can do about them today.

Finally, I am honored to lead Sabin's Product Development Partnership (PDP), which, through a partnership with Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital, is now based in Houston. We are spearheading the development of safe and cost-effective vaccines for five diseases that almost exclusively impact the world's poorest citizens. Our projects include vaccines for hookworm (currently in phase I clinical trials through support of the Gates Foundation and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs), schistosomiasis (which is about to enter phase 1 trials through support of the NIAID, NIH and the Brazilian Ministry of Health), Chagas disease and leishmaniasis (through support of the Carlos Slim Health Institute and Foundation) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) (through NIAID support). Through our product development partnership (PDP) we are working to ensure these vaccines will be affordable and accessible to those who need them most.

Each year at our annual Gold Medal Award Ceremony, we have recognized individuals working on vaccines or vaccine programs for meningitis, human papillomavirus (HPV), cholera, measles, mumps, rubella, malaria, polio, smallpox, rotavirus, and tuberculosis, among many others.

I would like to acknowledge the past Gold Medal winners in the room tonight by asking them to stand up. Here with us tonight we have Donald Henderson (1994 winner); Myron Levine (1998 winner); Phil Russell (1999 winner); Samuel Katz (2003 winner); Albert Kapikian (2005 winner); and John Schiller (2011 winner). This year marks the 20th year that Sabin has bestowed the award. We applaud these individuals and all of our past winners on their contributions to improving health worldwide.

This evening I would also want to recognize the recent passing of Dr. Hilary Koprowski, another giant in vaccinology who was awarded our gold medal in 2007.

I would also like to thank our sponsors for their role in making this event possible. We're grateful to the support of the Serum Institute of India, Sanofi Pasteur, and MedImmune.

This year, we are very pleased to be able to bestow the Sabin Gold Medal Award to another terrific researcher and scientist – Dr. Anne Gershon of Columbia University. Dr. Gershon has contributed significantly to research on the varicella/zoster virus – a common cause of chicken pox in children and shingles in adults.

Many of us in this room experienced chicken pox when we were children, and now that there is a safe, effective vaccine in use, most children will be spared this childhood disease.

Dr. Gershon's research and work was been fundamental to this success. Her investigation of the epidemiology, diagnosis, immunology, latency, prevention and treatment of varicella and zoster virus infections (VZV), contributed to its licensure.

Though the vaccine is now widely available and recommended for all healthy children, Dr. Gershon hasn't rested on her laurels. She is continuing to study the safety and efficacy of varicella vaccine now that it's widely in use.

It is my special pleasure now to introduce Dr. Samuel L. Katz, one of Dr. Gershon's esteemed colleagues, and as I mentioned earlier, also a Gold Medal award winner himself.

Dr. Katz is the Wilburt Cornell Davison Professor and Chairman emeritus of Pediatrics at Duke University. He has been a contributor to numerous vaccine discoveries, including the attenuated measles virus vaccine now used worldwide. In addition to this, Dr. Katz has been involved in studies of vaccinia, polio, rubella, influenza, pertussis, haemophilus influenzae b conjugates, HIV and others.

For 22 years, Dr. Katz was Chairman of Duke University's Department of Pediatrics. He has chaired the Committee on Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics (Redbook Committee), the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the CDC, the Vaccine Priorities Study of the Institute of Medicine (IOM), and several WHO, CVI and NIH panels.

He is a member of many scientific advisory committees and boards including the NIH, FDA, IOM, WHO, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and the Hasbro Children's Foundation. He chaired the Public Policy Council of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) and currently co-chairs its National Network for Immunization Information. For five years he was co-chair of the Indo-US Vaccine Action Program.

Dr. Katz currently chairs the Board of the International Vaccine Institute in Seoul, Korea.

It is especially poetic and meaningful for me to introduce Dr. Katz, who will in turn introduce Dr. Gershon. All three of us have collaborated over the years to edit what was really the founding and landmark textbook of pediatric infectious diseases – Krugman's Infectious Diseases of Children which has gone through eleven editions. I have to say that working with Drs. Gershon and Katz has been one of the most rewarding and experiences of my professional career.

Welcome Dr. Katz!