



Scoop



ChiliFest Today!
2 - 6 p.m., HMB Park

Friday, October 16, 1998

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS - HOUSTON MEDICAL SCHOOL

EVENTS TO KNOW:

- **ChiliFest TODAY, Oct. 16, 2 - 6 p.m.**, HMB Park.
- **FINAL DAY for SECC Contributions TODAY, Oct. 16.** See SECC Booth at ChiliFest.
- **Dr. David Bloom**, Harvard SPH lecturer **TODAY, Oct. 16.** 12 noon-1 p.m., SPH, Rms. 102 A&B.
- **Dean's Lecturer, Dr. Gunter Blobel**, Rockefeller University, **Oct. 28, 4-5 p.m.**, 3.001.
- **Dr. Benita Katzenellenbogen**, University of Illinois, Kroc Lecturer. "New Insights into the Actions of Estrogens and Antiestrogens," **Nov. 16, 3 - 4 p.m.**, 3.001.
- **Asthma Patients Needed for New Asthma Study.** For those on beta-agonist inhalers. Contact **Gloria Morris, 500-6542.**

FYI - Halloween Door Decorating Contest. Judging **Oct. 30.** Start decorating now. Contact **Kim Edmonson, 500-7293.**

UTmost Interest

Dr. Bryant Boutwell, Office of Community Affairs and Public Education, and wife, **Dr. Sharon Boutwell** (Spring Branch I.S.D.) addressed more than a thousand educators in Singapore last week at the invitation of the Singapore Ministry of Education. Workshops

and special presentations were made as part of the visit including a requested presentation at Temasek Polytechnic (junior college equivalent) on Problem-Based Learning facilitation...**Dr. Peter J. A. Davies**, Integrative Biology, Pharmacology and Physiology, will be in Japan for the next two weeks to lecture at medical schools and research institutes in Tsukuba, Tokyo, Yamagata, Kumamoto, and Nagoya. Then he will go to receive an honorary doctorate degree from the University Medical School of Debrecen in Hungary...**Dr. Gaillen Marshall**, director of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, was selected by his peers to be included in the fourth listing of *The Best Doctors in America.*

Hot News

DR. MURAD WINS THE NOBEL PRIZE

His father is from a mountainous Balkan state on the Adriatic Sea, Albania, and his mother is from East St. Louis. **Dr. Ferid Murad**, a Whiting, Indiana native and at the present moment, the UTHHSC's premiere clinical research scientist, did not start off October 12 as just another Monday morning. He was awakened at 4 a.m. with a call saying, "You have just been awarded the Nobel Prize."

Several hours later, at 11 a.m., 100 people hurriedly packed into the Medical School's lecture hall 2.103, and as TV and print media people gathered, **President M. David Low** announced "What a happy day this is. This is the best way to begin the week. Our heartfelt congratulations to Ferid." Low acknowledged that most scientists work a lifetime for an honor that usually doesn't bear fruit and that a passionate interest in the discipline is what it takes to further medicine and bring relief to patients.

He then handed the mike to **Dean Maximilian Buja** saying "Thank you for hiring Dr. Murad a year and a half ago." Buja went on to say "This is a tremendous day for science and the Medical School. It's tremendous to see how your insight into cardiovascular disease and the importance of regulating cardiac and blood vessel functioning, has led to these kinds of positive results."

Murad will receive his award on **Dec. 10** in Stockholm, Sweden. His 22-year research with nitric oxide (not to be confused with nitrous oxide or laughing gas), has led to important information about how it acts as a liaison to blood vessels to relax and open, lowering blood pressure. It is an important link in understanding heart disease, shock, and was critical to the



Dr. Ferid Murad, center, with **Dean Buja**, left and **President Low**, right.

anti-impotence drug Viagra's development. Two others, **Dr. Robert Furchgott**, a pharmacologist at the State University of New York (SUNY) in Brooklyn, and **Dr. Louis Ignarro**, a pharmacologist at the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Medicine, will share the \$955,500 prize with Murad.

Laughter erupted from the audience when a question was posed about how his prize money would be distributed. Murad responded, "I'll give it to my wife, **Carol**, who'll take it to Neiman Marcus." Carol, who at the start of their life together met her husband on a

college spring break in Fort Lauderdale, later added that the prize money would be put toward funds for education. Two daughters also work in science, one as a respiratory therapist and the other as a science editor. Two sons-in-law work as scientists, one in cardiology.

The press was curious how a white-coated scientist like Murad could be so down-to earth, commenting, "You seem like a regular kind of guy that shoots pool." The new nobel laureate laughed and said, "Actually we have a pool table in our home." He went on to pinpoint that his human skills were honed by being a clinician working with patients. The Medical School is a place, he pointed out, that fosters and encourages good research.

"I feel fortunate," said Murad. "It's a rare person who is happy and busy in their job 70-80% of the time." With that said, Murad put on his lab coat and calmly went back to work.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-HOUSTON
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER



Medical School

L. Maximilian Buja, M.D., Dean
Bryant Boutwell, Dr.P.H., Assistant Dean
Colleen O'Brien, Editor
e-mail: cobrien@dean.med.uth.tmc.edu
FAX: (713) 500-0597
E-Scoop online: <http://www.med.uth.tmc.edu>



Produced weekly by the Office of Community Affairs and Public Education

Houston Chronicle

Tuesday, Oct. 13, 1998

50 Cents

Houston scientist wins Nobel

Murad to share prize in medicine with 2 colleagues

By RUTH SORELLE
Houston Chronicle Medical Writer



Bon DeSoto / Chronicle

Dr. Ferid Murad, 62, stands in a lab at the Texas Medical Center after being told early Monday that he had won, with two colleagues, the Nobel Prize for medicine. Murad, who is chairman

of the Department of Integrative Biology at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston, was awakened at 4 a.m. by a phone call from the secretary of the Nobel committee.

A Houston scientist is one of three U.S. researchers awarded the Nobel Prize in medicine for work detailing the crucial biologic properties of nitric oxide — a colorless, odorless gas that transmits signals involved in regulating cells.

Dr. Ferid Murad, 62, chairman of the Department of Integrative Biology at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston, said the secretary of the Nobel committee called him Monday morning to tell him that he had won the prize.

The secretary apologized for waking Murad at 5 a.m. — whereupon Murad informed him it was 4 a.m. in Houston. Murad, nevertheless, was glad to get the news.

He ran upstairs, hurriedly showered and dressed because he knew he faced a long day. "It is fantastic to be recognized by one's peers," he said. "It's incredibly exciting. I'd like to share this with so many of the trainees who have worked with me over the years.

"I'm delighted and excited. I couldn't be happier."

He said he is glad he is sharing the \$800,000 award with close colleagues Robert F. Furchgott, 62, a pharmacologist at the State University of New York in Brooklyn, and Louis J. Ignarro, 57, at the University of California at Los Angeles.

The trio's work is not new, but Murad theorized that the award is being given now because drugs based on the theories the three Nobel winners have espoused are getting closer to patient studies.

Nitric oxide could play a role in atherosclerosis (or clogged arteries), diseases such as

See NOBEL on Page 4A.

Background note: Dr. Ferid Murad, chair, Integrative Biology, Pharmacology and Physiology, is a member of the National Academy of Sciences. He was a 1996 recipient of the Albert and Mary Lasker Basic Medical Research Award, widely-held to be the most significant United States biomedical science prize. When presented with this award, he was praised for having fundamentally advanced the understanding of biochemistry mechanisms in numerous cell types and tissues, including the roles of cyclic GMP and nitric oxide.

Murad has been active in both academic medicine and industry throughout his career. As the former president and chief executive officer of Molecular Geriatrics Corporation, a biopharmaceutical company active in the field of neuro-degenerative diseases, Murad believes that collaboration and teamwork between medicine and industry are vital. "Today we must think about different ways to support academic programs. In the past, we've been accustomed to state and federal funding, grants and clinical revenues. In the next decade, collaboration with industry will become important for turning revenues back into the system for more research. Industry benefits from the basic research that comes out of academics," explains Murad.

"From academic scientists, industry can target or process for a specific medical disease and utilize that information to develop drugs and other products. Since industry today is looking at short-term investment performance and keeping stock prices up through takeovers and mergers, it's getting more difficult for industry to think about long-term research projects. Therefore, industry will become more dependent upon academic research and, conversely, academic programs will become dependent on industry in collaboration to think about new sources of revenues to support the system."

The practical application for such research will most likely lead to developing new drugs for a variety of diseases and understanding precisely how they work. In the case of nitric oxide, for instance, it is a signal molecule of key importance for the cardiovascular system; it controls blood pressure by dilating arteries, affects behavior by activating nerve cells and when produced in white blood cells becomes toxic to invading bacteria and parasites. Murad has concentrated on the field of cell signaling or signal transduction systems. The questions he wants to answer are how is information transmitted from one place to another and once that information gets to a cell, how is it further transmitted or propagated inside a cell?