Gottschalk Recognized with Cassen Prize

Alexander Gottschalk, MD, a pioneer researcher and author who has helped to shape modern medical imaging, was awarded the 2006 Benedict Cassen Prize on June 5 at the 53rd annual meeting of the SNM in San Diego, CA. This honor, awarded biennially by the Education and Research Foundation (ERF) for SNM, is presented to a living scientist or physician/scientist whose work has led to a major advance in basic or clinical nuclear medicine science. Considered the equivalent of a Nobel Prize in nuclear medicine research, the award honors Benedict Cassen, whose invention of the rectilinear radioisotope scanner—the first instrument capable of making an image of a body organ in a patient—was seminal to the development of clinical nuclear medicine. Gottschalk is among 8 individuals who have been presented this prestigious $25,000 award by the ERF since 1994.

Gottschalk, a professor of diagnostic radiology at Michigan State University (MSU) in East Lansing, worked with the first clinically effective prototype Anger scintillation camera, performed the first dynamic camera studies of the brain and heart using ^{99m}Tc, and acquired the first dynamic camera renal studies. He is chair of the nuclear medicine working group Prospective Investigation of Pulmonary Embolism Diagnosis II (PIOPED II), which conducted definitive studies to determine the sensitivity, specificity, and negative predictive value of contrast-enhanced spiral CT for the diagnosis of pulmonary embolism.

"I am so proud to receive this award and to be included in a group that includes many friends and distinguished colleagues," said Gottschalk. "I was very fortunate to have remarkable nuclear medicine pioneers Hal Anger and Paul Harper as my mentors," he noted. "Their advancements allow current nuclear medicine physicians to continue the exploration of the basis of disease. I am thrilled to receive this distinctive honor, which also recognizes the important work being performed to advance quality patient care." His lecture at the June 5 SNM plenary session was titled, "How to Interpret and Report the V/Q Scan in the Post-PIOPED II Era."

"Dr. Gottschalk's research has truly advanced excellence in health care, the primary mission of the Education and Research Foundation," said Sue Weiss, ERF executive director. "His work has placed him among an elite group of 7 other researchers who have been awarded the Cassen Prize for their notable achievements." The ERF has provided more than $1.5 million in research funding to the molecular imaging/nuclear medicine community.

Alexander Gottschalk, center, accepted the Cassen award from Michael Devous (left), president of the Education and Research Foundation, and SNM President Peter Conti.

Gottschalk began his career as a research associate at the Donner Laboratory at Lawrence Radiation Lab at the University of California in Berkeley. He then spent a decade at the University of Chicago (UC), where he formed the university's first section of nuclear medicine. While at UC, he became professor of radiology, chief of the nuclear medicine section, chair of the radiology department, and director of the Argonne Cancer Research Hospital. He later moved to Yale University School of Medicine (New Haven, CT) as a professor of diagnostic radiology. At Yale, working with colleagues from cardiology, he established a pioneering cardiovascular nuclear medicine program. He was also director of the section of nuclear medicine, vice-chair of the diagnostic radiology department, and director of the diagnostic radiology residency program.

The Cassen recipient earned his bachelor's degree from Harvard College (Cambridge, MA) and his medical degree from Washington University Medical School (St. Louis, MO). He completed an internship at the University of Illinois Research and Educational Hospitals (Chicago, IL) and a radiology residency at UC.

Gottschalk served as editor-in-chief of the *Yearbook of Nuclear Medicine* and on committees for the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, as well as national committees for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the National Institute of General Medicine Sciences, and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, where he chaired the Residency Review Committee for diagnostic radiology. He has coauthored several texts and published more than 200 peer-reviewed journal articles.