

Wolf Receives 2006 de Hevesy Award

Walter Wolf, PhD, distinguished professor of pharmaceutical sciences and chair of the Biomedical Imaging Science Initiative at the University of Southern California (USC) was awarded the 2006 Georg Charles de Hevesy Nuclear Pioneer Award on June 4 at the 53rd Annual Meeting of the SNM in San Diego, CA. Wolf, a pioneer in the field of radiopharmacy, was recognized for his contributions to the nuclear medicine profession.

“For nearly 50 years, Walter Wolf has continued to make major breakthroughs in the study of human biology and disease,” said SNM President Peter S. Conti, MD, PhD. “He realized the need for pharmacists to specialize in the field of radioactive drug products when he joined USC in the late 1950s, establishing USC’s radiopharmacy program in the 1960s and running it for nearly 20 years. Through his unparalleled talents and dedication, Dr. Wolf played an instrumental role in advancing the profession.”

Each year, SNM presents the de Hevesy Award to an individual or individuals for outstanding contributions to the field of nuclear medicine. De Hevesy, widely recognized as one of the originators of the subdiscipline, was the author of seminal books and papers on radiochemistry and the recipient of the 1943 Nobel Prize in chemistry for his investigation of the absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination of radioactive compounds in the human body. This research laid the foundation for nuclear medicine in diagnosis and therapy.

“It is an honor to receive the Georg Charles de Hevesy Nuclear Pioneer Award,” said Wolf. He added that although recognition for past research was welcome, “I am much more excited about the work I’ve yet to do.” The recipient of the 1999 Paul C. Aebersold Award continues to be active in the field and to expand his research activities into new dimensions of molecular imaging. Wolf founded the USC Pharmacokinetic Imaging Program and has been its director since 1996. A full professor in the School of Pharmacy since 1970 and distinguished professor since 1998, he served as director of its radiopharmacy program from 1969 to 1998. His research has focused on pharmacokinetic imaging, a novel approach that allows noninvasive studies of drug biodistribution, targeting, and metabolism using both nuclear medicine imaging and MR spectroscopy techniques. His interests also include studies on the synthesis and action of radiopharmaceuticals.

The senior consultant in radiopharmacy and pharmacology for the Los Angeles County/USC Medical Center since 1987, Wolf also served there as director of radiopharmacy services (1971–1987). His academic appointments have included visiting assistant professor (1962–1963), assistant professor (1963–1965), and associate professor (1965–1970), all at the



SNM President Peter Conti (left) selected Walter Wolf as the 2006 Georg Charles de Hevesy Nuclear Pioneer in recognition of his influential work in radiopharmacy.

USC School of Pharmacy; research associate with the USC chemistry department (1959–1962); research associate with Amherst College (MA) (1958–1959); research associate, McGill University (Montreal, Canada) (1957–1958); associate professor of organic chemistry, University of Concepción, Chile (1956–1958); Stagiaire and Attaché de Recherches, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (Paris, France) (1955–1956); visiting professor, Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1973, 1976, and 1983); and visiting professor, Oak Ridge Associated Universities (TN) (1967–1982).

A former president of the Education and Research Foundation for SNM, Wolf received a bachelor’s degree in the natural sciences (1948) and a master’s degree in organic chemistry (1952), both from the University of the Republic in Montevideo, Uruguay. He earned his doctorate in biochemistry from the University of Paris in France in 1956.

Wolf, a former chair of SNM’s Correlative Imaging Council, is a foreign corresponding member of the Académie Nationale de Pharmacie (Paris) and a fellow of both the Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences and the International Society of Magnetic Resonance in Medicine. He received the Genia Czerniak Prize in Nuclear Medicine (Israel, 1979 and 1986); the Amersham Prize for Best Radiopharmaceutical Paper at the Fourth World Federation of Nuclear Medicine and Biology (1986); the Merit Award, University of Judaism, 1975 and 1978; and the Pioneer Award in Nuclear Pharmacy, American Pharmaceutical Association, 1996 and 2000. ✧