LASKER: Lecturers explain their science breakthrough cure

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The first lectures at USC were presented March 5 at the Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito at the Keck School on March 5.

The next two series, three pioneers in the development of cochlear implants illuminated the history of this breakthrough technology.

“Fifty years ago, there was no effective treatment for patients with severe hearing loss,” said Keck School of Medicine of USC Dean Carmen A. Puliafito, MD, professor of medicine and surgery.

John House, MD ('67), a clinical professor of otolaryngology – head and neck surgery offered a few remarks about his uncle, William House, who worked on single-channel cochlear implant helped pioneer the technology. “We’re very honored to have the other pioneers here,” he said. “We’re all standing on the shoulders of giants.”

To read more about their lectures, visit http://tinyurl.com/kx7f7m.

USC scientists awarded $19 million to seek macular degeneration cure

The nearly $19 million study is led by Mark Humayun, MD, PhD, professor of ophthalmology and director of the Division of Ophthalmology.

Dr. Varma is an internationally recognized clinician-scientist, professor and chair of ophthalmology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. He is the principal investigator of the Los Angeles Latino Eye Study, Multi-Ethnic Pediatric Eye Disease Study, African-American Eye Disease Study and the Chinese-American Eye Study in addition to his studies on blindness and vision impairment for the World Health Organization.

The Lasker Awards — among the most respected science prizes in the world — are given each year by the foundation for outstanding basic and clinical medical research discoveries and for lifetime achievement in medicine. The awards, which carry an honorarium of $250,000 in each category, were presented on Sept. 20, 2013, in New York City.

The Lasker Award recipients (from left) Blake S. Wilson, Gunnar M. Clausen and Ingeborg Hochmair discuss their work on cochlear implants at the 2013 Lasker Lectures for the Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Research Award, held on April 10 in Mayer Auditorium at USC, titled “Cochlear Implant: Past, Present, Future.”

In an historic first, the Keck School of Medicine of USC hosted the 2014 Lasker Lectures featuring recipients of the 2013 Lasker Awards during separate events in March and April at the Health Sciences Campus.

This was the first time in the 68-year history of the foundation that a major academic medical center hosted lectures delivered by all of the year’s winners of both the basic and clinical medical research awards.

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Steve Cohn
Keck Medicine Initiatives surpass past $600 million mark

The Keck Medicine Initiatives, part of the Campaign for the University of Southern California, has surpassed $600 million in gifts and pledges and is making significant progress toward its ambitious $1.5 billion fundraising goal.

Since the last Davis Report, our campaign progress has increased by more than $67 million. We are grateful for the generosity of our donors and their commitment to improve and expand research and clinical programs, student education, and facility support at USC. Gifts of note include:

Kevin Family Trust — an estate gift of nearly $7 million to the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center to endow a chair for basic cancer and other needs as directed by the Chair, Cancer Center Director, Stephen Gruber, MD, MPH. Of the total gift, $1 million will fund unrestricted research under Gruber’s direction.

Aydin and Sydney Irama Charitable Foundation — a gift of $450,000 to test the accuracy and efficacy of ultrasound contrast micro-bubble agents to detect — a gift of $3,000,000 to support the Steven and Deborah Chaudhary, MD, PhD; under the direction of Ann Mohrbacher, MD, and Preet Parkash, MD, to develop a promising new anti-cancer therapy that is currently in clinical trials; a gift of $350,000 to support the Tsutayo Ichioka and Satsuki Rose Memorial Fund to support — a special gift to — a gift of $260,000 to support the Steven and Deborah Lebowitz Foundation Fund at the Keck School of Medicine, and — a gift in support of Inderbir Gill, MD, MCh, professor of neurosurgery, and the Department of Ophthalmology.