Dr. Henry Pitot, Professor Emeritus of Oncology and of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of Wisconsin, has been named the recipient of ASIP’s Gold-Headed Cane Award. The Gold-Headed Cane Award is the highest honor bestowed upon a member of ASIP. It is given in recognition of long-term contributions to pathology, including meritorious research, outstanding teaching, and general excellence in the field. Dr. Pitot’s career has benefited society and has enriched pathology in many ways, through research, teaching, and administration.

Dr. Pitot has been productive as an international figure in cancer research, especially in the field of liver carcinogenesis. His early pioneering research on enzyme induction and protein synthesis in transplantable liver tumors laid the foundation for future studies on molecular differences and heterogeneity of neoplasms.

He demonstrated that not only tumor promotion but tumor progression is highly important in the evolution of cancer. His work prompted the EPA to challenge cancer researchers to design assays for the detection of promoters and tumor progressors. In response to that challenge, he developed the liver cancer bioassay in which substances causing cancer could be examined. This assay is the foundation of many regulatory policy decisions affecting the use of substances throughout the chemical industry, and it has made a huge impact on our modern society in its efforts to protect our environment and minimize the exposure of toxic substances to human populations.

His current work on liver cancer has focused on identifying the genetic changes associated with tumor progression, and he has recently published several pioneering studies on chromosomal changes associated with liver cancer.

“Since 1954, Dr. Pitot has published over 400 papers in peer-reviewed journals with the subject of most on oncogenesis and many on hepatic oncogenesis,” said Dr. Michael Hart, Professor and Chair, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of Wisconsin. “His research is always on the cutting edge, is acknowledged around the world as among the very best in hepatic oncogenesis, and he is universally identified as a pathologist par excellence.”

Dr. Pitot has been a major contributor in academic pathology being a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin for more than 40 years. He was chairman of the Department of Pathology at the University of Wisconsin from 1968-1971. He became Acting Dean of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine in 1971 and held that position through 1973. In 1973, he became Director of the McArdle Laboratory for Cancer Research through 1991.

During his tenure at McArdle, the institution became a powerhouse of research in cell and molecular biology with an outstanding faculty. Dr. Pitot used this opportunity to convert the laboratory into a training ground for experimental pathologists. More than 20 pathologists were trained in experimental cancer biology under his tutelage.

Dr. Pitot has also been a valued mentor to many research scientists. More than 100 people holding faculty positions in research institutions and universities throughout the world have received training research in his laboratory. The Pitot alumni have a deep respect for him that has continued to increase throughout the years.

For many years Dr. Pitot has been at the forefront of advisory committees of national importance. He was a member (1976-1979) and then chairman (1979-1982) of the President’s National Cancer Advisory Board. He served as a member of numerous advisory boards with the EPA and NIEHS. He was also the co-President of the American Association of Pathologists (the forerunner of ASIP) from 1976-1977 and the President of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine (1992-1993).

His research and contributions to society have been recognized with many honors, including the Distinguished Service Award from the American Cancer Society, the Parke-Davis Award for Research in Experimental Pathology from ASIP and the Nobel Foundation Research Recognition Award.

In addition to his many accomplishments, Dr. Pitot authored “Fundamentals of Oncology,” the definitive graduate school textbook for cancer biology. This book is used in most of the cancer biology classes throughout the world and has shaped the understanding of new researchers for cancer behavior, biology, genetics, and treatment.
Dr. Pitot received his B.S. in Chemistry from the Virginia Military Institute and M.D. and Ph.D. from Tulane University.

Dr. Pitot will receive the Gold-Headed Cane, a mahogany cane topped with a 14 karat gold head and engraved band, at ASIP's Annual Meeting at Experimental Biology 2005 in San Diego. In addition to his research, teaching and administrative accomplishments, Dr. Grisham found time to be a leader of, and public advocate, for pathology. He served as President of the American Association of Pathologists (currently the ASIP), as special reviewer of the Extramural Research and Training Division of NIH, and as President of FASEB. He spent four years each as chair of Pathology Study Section A and B at NIH, and has chaired numerous Advisory Panels and Research Committees. From 1987-1991 Dr. Grisham chaired the FASEB Public Affairs Committee, where he advocated public awareness of, and education in, pathology, and worked to increase appreciation in Congress for the importance of pathological research.

Nominating Dr. Grisham for the Gold-Headed Cane, Dr. David G. Kaufman, Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at UNC, says his work "represents an outstanding record of accomplishment that has had a profound influence on the study of hepatic cell biology and hepatic carcinogenesis." Dr. Kaufman calls Dr. Grisham "one of the outstanding scientific figures in the field."

A Tennessee native, Dr. Grisham received his BA (1953, Chemistry, Cum Laude) and his MD (1957) from Vanderbilt University.

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