Great Honor for Heidelberg Cancer Researcher
Nobel Laureate Harald zur Hausen Inducted into German Research Hall of Fame

The former Scientific Director of the German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) in Heidelberg and Medicine Nobel Prize Laureate, Professor Harald zur Hausen was inducted into the Hall of Fame of German Research to honor his life's work. The induction ceremony took place on September 29, 2010 in Berlin. Professor Harald zur Hausen's research in the area of virus-induced cancer has made him a pioneer for new approaches in the prevention and treatment of cancer. The distinction honors the scientific excellence of his groundbreaking research and recognizes the role he has achieved in science in Germany and worldwide.

"I am very pleased about this distinction, it is a great honor for me," zur Hausen said at the induction ceremony, which was attended by about 80 invited guests from business, science and politics. "It also recognizes a research field which I still find extremely fascinating and promising. The share of infection-related cancers is about 20 percent. This means that one fifth of cancers could be avoided if we were able to prevent the causal infection. Currently, we are investigating, for example, whether viruses can cause leukemias and lymphomas."

For his work in tumor virus research, which uncovered the connection between infection with human papillomaviruses (HPV) and the development of cervical cancer, Professor Harald zur Hausen was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 2008. As far back as the 1970s, zur Hausen proposed the thesis that human papillomaviruses are responsible for the development of cervical cancer. Later he was able to identify the mechanisms whereby the virus causes infected cells to become transformed. His groundbreaking work has made it possible to develop a vaccine against HPV – the first ever cancer vaccine to be developed.

The German Research Hall of Fame is an initiative of the business journal manager magazin – in analogy to its Business Hall of Fame – to honor outstanding scientists who have made important contributions to the further development of Germany as a research location. The selection process is a close collaboration of science and business: A committee of twelve scientists nominates a number of candidates, out of which seven business representatives select the laureates.

Alongside Harald zur Hausen, other laureates inducted into the Hall of Fame were Manfred Eigen from Gottingen, Chemistry Nobel Laureate of 1967; Günter Spur from Berlin, academic pioneer of production science; and Karl Ziegler (1896 – 1973), Chemistry Nobel Laureate of 1963. They are in the best of company of last-year's laureates, Karlheinz Brandenburg, who made substantial contributions to the development of MP3 data compression technology; 2007 Nobel Prize winner in Physics, Peter Gruenberg; nuclear physicist Werner Heisenberg (1901 – 1976); and biochemist Feodor Lynen (1911 – 1979).

Harald zur Hausen studied medicine at the Universities of Bonn, Hamburg and Dusseldorf, where he also achieved his doctoral degree. He was a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute of Hygiene and Microbiology in Dusseldorf and an Assistant Professor of Virology at the Children's Hospital in Philadelphia. He was an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Virology at the University of Wurzburg and, subsequently, held the chair of Virology at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. In 1977, he accepted the chair of Virology at the University of Freiburg. From 1983 to 2003, Harald zur Hausen was Chairman and Scientific Member of
the Management Board of the German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) in Heidelberg. He has been honored with numerous national and international awards including the Robert Koch Award, the Paul Ehrlich and Ludwig Darmstätter Award, the Jung Prize, the Charles S. Mott Award of the General Motors Cancer Foundation, the William B. Coley Award for Distinguished Research in Basic Immunology of the Cancer Research Institute, the Prince Mahidol Award and the Warren Alpert Prize of Harvard University as well as the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 2008.

A picture for this press release is available at: www.dkfz.de/de/presse/pressemitteilungen/2010/images/ZurHausen.jpg

The German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) is the largest biomedical research institute in Germany and is a member of the Helmholtz Association of National Research Centers. More than 2,200 staff members, including 1,000 scientists, are investigating the mechanisms of cancer and are working to identify cancer risk factors. They provide the foundations for developing novel approaches in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer. In addition, the staff of the Cancer Information Service (KiD) offers information about the widespread disease of cancer for patients, their families, and the general public. The Center is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (90%) and the State of Baden-Württemberg (10%).

Dr. Stefanie Seltmann
Leiterin Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit
Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum
Im Neuenheimer Feld 280
D-69120 Heidelberg
T: +49 6221 42 2854
F: +49 6221 42 2968
presse@dkfz.de