

News

Wafik El-Deiry, M.D. Ph.D. receives the Kuwait Prize in Applied Sciences for work on “Cancer Diseases”

On December 14th, 2010 Dr. Wafik El-Deiry received the international Kuwait Prize in Applied Sciences for work on “Cancer Diseases” at the Award Ceremony in Kuwait City, Kuwait. Dr. El-Deiry was recognized for his work on tumor suppressor genes including p53 and TRAIL, and mechanisms that determine cancer therapeutic response. Dr. El-Deiry was recognized for developing new strategies targeting cell death for cancer therapy. The Kuwait Prize is administered by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences under the management of the Amir of Kuwait, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who presides over its Board of Directors, and the Director General of the Foundation, Dr. Ali Al-Shamlan.

Dr. Ibrahim Al-Shareedah, the Director of Prizes at the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, stated: “These are highly prestigious awards in basic and applied science, technology, economic and social sciences, arts and literature, as well as Arabic heritage. The Kuwait Prize is very much sought after and is granted for seminal work over the prior ten years. In this region of the world, the Kuwait Prize is thought of as the Middle Eastern Nobel Prize.”

Dr. Al-Shareedah described the Kuwait Prize further by saying, “The Prize is given in different categories each year, can be shared and represents a long and competitive selection process. These are relatively old prizes that have been given annually since the 1970’s to the leading scholars, highly accomplished creative individuals who are internationally recognized innovators from the Middle East. The Kuwait Prize has also been withheld on a number of occasions as some nominees only demonstrated potential but had not achieved a distinct record of achievements.” The Prize includes a Gold Medal, a Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) Shield,



and a Certificate of Recognition that explains the qualifications and importance of the winning work in short. The Prize is also accompanied by a cash award of K.D. 30,000 (thirty thousand Kuwaiti dinars) or approximately U.S. \$100,000 (one hundred thousand U.S. dollars).

Dr. Wafik El-Deiry, the 2009 recipient of the Kuwait Prize in Applied Sciences is the Rose Dunlap Professor of Medicine and Chief of Hematology/Oncology at the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center and Associate Director for Translational Research at the Penn State Hershey Cancer Institute. Dr. El-Deiry is also an American Cancer Society Research Professor, a highly cited author with nearly 300 peer-reviewed original manuscripts and reviews, and has edited four books. He is a member of numerous professional societies including the Association of American Physicians, the American Society for Clinical Investigation, the Interurban Clinical Club, the American Association for Cancer Research and the American Society of Clinical Oncology. He has been cited as one of “America’s Top Oncologists” by the Consumers’ Research Council of America. He serves as Editor-in-Chief of *Cancer Biology & Therapy*.

Dr. El-Deiry said: “I am deeply honored to receive this international award, and to be recognized in this unique way in the Middle East and in Kuwait.” Dr. El-Deiry commented on the effort to diagnose and treat cancer in the Middle East by saying, “I am hopeful that more effort will be dedicated to understanding the causes of cancer, risk factors, genetics, epidemiology, and that progress will be made

in developing new personalized therapies to treat cancer in the Middle East. There has never been a more exciting time to study and treat cancer due to the many advances that have been made and the availability of new technologies.” Dr. El-Deiry went on to raise a concern by saying: “However, with continued smoking and pollution in the Middle East, cancer rates will continue to rise, and the people will need better treatments. This will only come about through continued investments in basic and clinical research, and efforts to prevent cancer through cancer screening and prevention, in part through smoking cessation. I think there is opportunity for Middle Eastern physicians and scientists to contribute significantly to the world-wide effort to understand and treat cancer, and to more actively work towards reducing the burden of cancer in the Middle East.”

In addition to Dr. El-Deiry, whose award is in Applied Sciences, Dr. Majed Chergui, Professor at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lusanne and Director of the Laboratory of Ultrafast Spectroscopy won the Kuwait Prize for Basic Sciences in “Physics” and Dr. Ayman Fuad Sayyid, Director of the Center of Editing of the Ancient Arabic Texts at the Al-Azhar University, won the Kuwait Prize for “City Planning and Topography.” Each of the Kuwait Prize recipients gave a presentation of their work.

About the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS)

The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) www.kfas.org is a private, non-profit organization,

established by an Amiri Decree issued on December 12th, 1976 (Thul-Hijjah, 21st 1396 AH). KFAS is managed and administered by a Board of Directors (BOD), chaired by H.H. the Amir of the State of Kuwait. The Board is comprised of six members appointed by H.H. for a period of three years. KFAS receives financial contributions by the Kuwaiti Shareholding Companies, amounting to 1% of the net annual profit.

The Board of Directors appoints a Director General who manages the scientific, administrative and financial activities of KFAS and monitors the implementation of the policies set by the BOD.

The goal of KFAS is to promote scientific, technological and intellectual progress within the State of Kuwait and the region. The objective of KFAS is to 1) Provide financial sustenance to research in basic and applied

sciences, 2) Support projects of national priority, 3) Award prizes and recognition at national, regional and international levels, 4) Organize scientific symposia and conferences, 5) Enrich the Arabic language library by publishing journals, books and encyclopedias, and 6) Promote scientific and cultural awareness.

KFAS provides research grants to encourage researchers and supports the infrastructure of national scientific institutions for research by providing research funding for individuals or a group of researchers from Kuwaiti institutions. Grants may also be awarded to non-Kuwaiti institutions, provided the research project is administered by a Kuwaiti institution. Funded research covers all the scientific areas that address national concerns. These areas include Biological, Engineering and Technology, Medical, Natural, and Social Sciences and Humanities.

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