

**ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF  
THE KING FAISAL INTERNATIONAL PRIZE  
ON THE RESULTS OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEES  
IN THEIR MEETINGS HELD  
BETWEEN 6/11/1420H-9/11/1420H  
CORRESPONDING TO 12/2/2000G-15/2/2000G**

Riyadh, 15 February 2000. HRH Prince Khaled AI Faisal, Director-General of King Faisal Foundation today announced the winners for the 2000 King Faisal International Prizes. The Selection Committees have this year chosen seven laureates for the five Prize topics.

Addressing an audience of nearly 400 academics and journalists, Prince Khaled thanked the committee members and expressed his appreciation of their choices. "The objectives of King Faisal International Prize are to reward excellence and to encourage research that benefits mankind. The outstanding contributions made by this year's winners are sure to have meaningful consequences for many people."

This year's category for **Science** was Biology. The prize was jointly awarded to:

**Professor Edward Osborne Wilson** of Harvard University and **Dr. John Craig Venter** of the Institute for Genomic Research. Both laureates are American.

Professor Wilson is one of the most outstanding biologists of the century. He has been a pioneer of major scientific disciplines: the field of sociobiology which seeks to elucidate the genetic basis of human and animal behavior, the study of species within ecosystems, and the conservation of the biological diversity of species. In addition, he has made an ambitious attempt to bring together, in a single conceptual framework, various fields of knowledge, from natural and social sciences to humanities and the arts.

Dr. Venter has established novel techniques for the rapid identification of genes and the fast and economical sequencing of entire genomes. These approaches have already revealed the complete genetic make-up of several

species of micro-organisms, including agents of human disease. Dr. Venter's work has contributed significantly to the elucidation of the human genome.

**Professor Cynthia Jane Kenyon**, a Professor at University of California, San Francisco, has been awarded the King Faisal International Prize for Medicine. Her highly original research has shown, for the first-time, that the process of aging is controlled hormonally through the insulin receptor system. The important outcome of Professor Kenyon's research is that aging is now amenable to the possibility of hormone-based, therapeutic intervention.

The prize for **Arabic Literature** (Early Arab literary Critics) has been awarded jointly to **Professor Abd Allah El Tayeb** from Sudan and **Professor Izz El Din Ismael Abd AI Ghani** from Egypt. Professor El Tayeb's 5-volume book on the composition and appreciation of Arabic poetry is regarded as a classic both in its content and novel approach. For decades it has been a major reference to scholars. This masterly work not only reflects El Tayeb's encyclopedic knowledge of poetry and other Arabic arts, but also contributes significantly to the correction of several misconceptions regarding traditional Arabic literary criticism. Professor Abd AI Ghani is a prominent literary critic who insight fully associates modern literary concepts with classical views. Because of moderation and intellectual balance in his writings, he has been able to make valuable contributions to diverse contemporary literary schools.

The Bangladeshi scholar Professor Muhammed Mohar Ali has been named the winner of the prize for Islamic Studies (The Spread and Cultural Impact of Islam outside the Arab World). His 4-volume book A History of the Muslims of Bengal is characterized by its originality, depth, and objectivity. His methodology, detailed research, and insight have resulted in an exceptional work.

The prize for Service to Islam was announced in December 1999. Egypt's renowned Islamic institution AI Azhar AI Sharif was selected for the long and exceptional services it has rendered to the Islamic world.

Winners will receive their prizes at an official ceremony in Riyadh later in the year. Each of the five prize categories consists of a certificate summarizing the laureate's work, a 24-carat, 200-gram gold medal, and a cash award of US\$200,000. Co-winners in any category share the monetary grant.

Topics for the 2001 King Faisal International Prize are Science (Physics), Medicine (Organ Transplantation), Arabic Literature (Studies Dealing with Modern Arabic Prose), Islamic Studies (Studies on Topics with No Islamic Legal Precedent).

#### Notes to Editors

1. Professor Wilson is renowned for his Pulitzer Prize-winning books *On Human Nature* and *The Ants*, a seminal work in the field of sociobiology.

2. Dr. Venter is the Founder and President of the Celera Genomics Corporation and Founder and Chairman of the Institute for Genomic Research" Rockville, Maryland.

3. Professor Kenyon holds the Herbert Boyer Distinguished Professorship of Biochemistry and Biophysics in the University of California in San Francisco. Her research on the genetic and molecular basis of aging have shown that the process may be hormonally influenced by targeted hormonal intervention.

4. Professor EI Tayeb is a Professor Emeritus of Arabic at Khartoum University and former Vice-Chancellor of both Khartoum and Juba Universities. He is the author of more than 40 books in the field of Arabic literature.

5. Professor Abd AI Ghani is a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Arabic Language and Arts at Ain Shams University, Cairo. He plays an important role in the cultural life of Egypt and is the founder several literary magazine and the author of numerous books.

6. Professor All is a specialist in the Islamic history of Bengal and the author of 12 books and numerous research papers.

7. AI Azhar mosque was built in Cairo in the late 10th century. It soon earned a reputation for its religious scholarship. Consequently, as a complement to the existing University of Egypt, AI Azhar opened its own university. Throughout the centuries, it has maintained its position as a spiritual and intellectual focal point for Muslims everywhere.

8. Nominations for Prizes must be submitted by 31 April 2000. For more information, contact King Faisal International Prize, P. O. Box 22476, Riyadh 11495.

9. In 1999, two former KFIP winners were awarded Nobel Prizes: Gunter Blobel (Medicine) and Ahmed Zewail (Science). Professor Blobel won the 1996 KFIP for Medicine and the 1999 Nobel Prize for successfully deciphering the chemical signals that proteins use to navigate around living cells. This breakthrough has had an immense impact on cell research. Blobel's discovery could help lead to powerful treatments in cures for such diseases as Alzheimer's and cancer. Professor Zewail is a 1989 KFIP Science laureate. His pioneering work on time-resolved, femtosecond spectroscopy has revolutionized chemistry. His ingenious method of photographing chemical reactions at a 'shutter' speed of a thousandth of a trillionth of a second allows scientists to see how chemical bonds break and reform. This could lead to important developments in industrial chemistry and the manufacture of drugs. A total of five KFIP winners have won Nobel Prizes.

10. King Faisal International Prize is a branch of King Faisal Foundation, the Middle East's largest philanthropic organization. Through its numerous activities around the world, KFF preserves and promotes Islamic culture, assists needy communities, advances educational opportunities, and

encourages research, particularly in the fields of science, medicine, and Islamic studies. King Faisal foundation was formed in 1976 by the eight sons of King Faisal as a means of carrying on their father's good works and preserving his memory.