UNIVERSITY OF UTAH ANNOUNCES PRESTIGIOUS JON AND KAREN HUNTSMAN PRESIDENTIAL PROFESSORSHIPS IN CANCER RESEARCH

June 10, 2009, Salt Lake City -- The University of Utah is pleased to announce a remarkable gift to support cancer research. The Jon and Karen Huntsman Presidential Professorships in Cancer Research will benefit the critical cancer research programs at Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI). The professorships were made possible by a generous donation from Utah philanthropists Jon M. and Karen Huntsman, to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Huntsman Cancer Institute this year. These esteemed professorships honor individuals for both their outstanding scholarship and their contributions to HCI's mission, vision and values.

"These prestigious awards will provide lifesaving cancer research funds to the University of Utah. This selfless donation from the Huntsman family further demonstrates their unparalleled generosity and steadfast commitment to lessen - and ultimately, eliminate - the burden of cancer on patients and their families through the pursuit of research," says Michael K. Young, president of the University of Utah.

The gift will provide a source of guaranteed funds to support the cancer research activities of five HCI investigators. The Jon and Karen Huntsman Presidential Professorships in Cancer Research will award $375,000 annually to provide $75,000 for each of the presidential professorships, one of the university's most coveted recognitions for research excellence. "This will add tremendously to the extraordinary success the U is having this year in securing external research funding," adds Young.

The five researchers to receive the prestigious Jon and Karen Huntsman Presidential Professorship in Cancer Research are Bradley Cairns, PhD; Anita Kinney, PhD; Stephen Lessnick, MD, PhD; Leigh Neumayer, MD; and Sunil Sharma, MD. "Each of these individuals is a world class cancer researcher and scholar, representing the breadth of research at HCI: basic science, translational research, clinical research, and population science," says Mary Beckerle, PhD, executive director of Huntsman Cancer
Institute. "Each of the awardees has also been a leader in developing HCI's research programs, contributing to our scientific rigor, collaboration and impact."

**Bradley Cairns, PhD:** Cairns studies the earliest cellular changes that lead to cancer and is a world leader in understanding control of gene expression. He has strong collaborations to study leukemia and colon cancers. He holds investigator posts at Huntsman Cancer Institute and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and serves as the director of the university's distinguished molecular biology graduate program. In 1998, he joined the University of Utah, where he is a professor in the Department of the Oncological Sciences. He completed his PhD in cell biology at Stanford University.

**Anita Kinney, PhD:** Kinney is an epidemiologist and a national leader in the study of cancer prevention in diverse populations. She serves as the leader of HCI's cancer control and population sciences program. Kinney has 14 years of experience as an oncology nurse and nurse practitioner, and has developed innovative cancer coursework for the College of Nursing at the University of Utah. She earned her PhD from the University of Texas and joined the faculty of the University of Utah. She is an associate professor of epidemiology in the Department of Internal Medicine.

**Stephen Lessnick MD, PhD:** Dr. Lessnick is a clinician-scientist who specializes in Ewing's sarcoma, a bone cancer afflicting children and young adults. Lessnick serves as co-leader of HCI's nuclear control of cell growth and differentiation program, and is a principal figure in the development of children's cancer research programs at the University of Utah. Dr. Lessnick earned his MD, PhD, from the University of California, Los Angeles, and joined the faculty of the University of Utah in 2004. He is an associate professor of pediatrics.

**Leigh Neumayer, MD:** Dr. Neumayer's work as a breast cancer surgeon is bolstered by her research portfolio in which she has made significant contributions to the study of quality of life outcomes and risk reduction for breast cancer patients. She serves as vice chair of the clinical cancer investigations committee, which has oversight responsibility for clinical trials at HCI. She completed her medical degree at Baylor College of Medicine and joined the faculty of the University of Utah in 1993. She is a
professor in the Department of Surgery.

**Sunil Sharma, MD:** Dr. Sharma is an internationally recognized leader in cancer clinical trials and drug development. He was recently recruited to the University of Utah, where he will serve as the senior director of clinical research at HCI. In this position, he will utilize his significant experience as a cancer clinical trialist and researcher to develop HCI's Center for Investigational Therapeutics, and will provide invaluable mentoring to junior faculty members. Dr. Sharma has trained at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and led the development of new cancer therapies for Novartis. He will serve as a professor in the Department of Internal Medicine.

The University of Utah is the flagship institution of the Utah System of Higher Education. Founded in 1850, it is the first and largest public higher education institution in Utah, with more than 28,000 students and a campus comprising almost 1,500 acres in the eastern foothills of Salt Lake City. A major academic and research institution with an extensive health sciences center, the university offers majors in 72 subjects at the undergraduate level and more than 90 major fields of study at the graduate level.

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