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Prestigious Research Honor goes to Jeffrey Bluestone

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The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) will award its highest honor for basic diabetes research to Jeffrey Bluestone, PhD, an internationally recognized leader in autoimmunity research and the director of the Diabetes Center at UCSF. Bluestone will receive the Gerold & Kayla Grodsky Basic Science Award at a JDRF event May 21 in Manhattan.

Bluestone's research has helped clarify the molecular-level mechanisms that control the immune response. His work has led to clinical trials of drugs that selectively block activation of the immune system's T-cells, preventing autoimmune reactions or rejection of transplanted organs without destroying the T-cells in the process. Such drugs have already shown promise in helping arrest the early stages of type 1 diabetes and in preventing rejection of islet cells transplanted to treat type 1 diabetes.

He is director of the UCSF-based Immune Tolerance Network, an international collaboration of more than 80 researchers coordinating clinical testing of new therapies to induce immune tolerance and improve treatments of autoimmune diseases, transplantation and allergies. Bluestone is the AW and Mary Clausen Distinguished Professor in Metabolism and Endocrinology at UCSF.

This year's award links two generations of UCSF diabetes researchers. The Gerold & Kayla Grodsky Basic Science Award was established by the JDRF in recognition of diabetes research at UCSF by Gerold M. Grodsky, PhD, UCSF professor emeritus in biochemistry and biophysics and an authority on the regulation of insulin synthesis and secretion. Grodsky is a consultant to the Diabetes Center at UCSF. The award is coupled with an endowed prize added by Dr. Grodsky and his late wife, Kayla.

A second award will be given at the May 21 JDRF dinner. Len Harrison, head of the Autoimmunity and Transplantation Division at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research in Australia, will receive the David Rumbough Award for Scientific Excellence.

JDRF was founded in 1970 by the parents of children with juvenile, or type 1, diabetes. The organization has provided more than $680 million to diabetes research worldwide.

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