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**American Society of Human Genetics Honors
both Kurt Hirschhorn, M.D., and Rochelle Hirschhorn, M.D.,
with Victor A. McKusick Leadership Awards**

BETHESDA, MD. -- July 23, 2013 -- The [American Society of Human Genetics \(ASHG\)](http://www.ashg.org) has named Kurt Hirschhorn, M.D., and Rochelle Hirschhorn, M.D., as the recipients of the 2013 Victor A. McKusick Leadership Award.

Dr. Kurt Hirschhorn is Professorial Lecturer of Pediatric Human Genetics, Professorial Lecturer of Genetics and Genomics Sciences and Professorial Lecturer of Medicine at Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Dr. Rochelle Hirschhorn is Research Professor and Professor Emerita of Medicine, Cell Biology and Pediatrics in the Department of Medicine at NYU Langone Medical Center.

This award, named in honor of the late Victor A. McKusick, M.D., recognizes individuals whose professional achievements have fostered and enriched the development of human genetics.

“The enduring leadership and vision provided by the Drs. Hirschhorn have helped human genetics to flourish and assimilate into the broader context of science, medicine and health,” said Joseph D. McInerney, Executive Vice President of ASHG. “They also have helped to improve awareness and understanding of human genetics among policymakers and the general public.”

ASHG will present the McKusick Award to Drs. Hirschhorn, who are Institute of Medicine members and founding members of the American College of Medical Genetics, on Saturday, October 26, at the organization’s 63rd annual meeting in Boston.

The McKusick Award honors the combined contributions of Drs. Hirschhorn, who have been members of ASHG for over 40 years and have served in many society leadership positions, including president and member on the Board of Directors and Editorial Board.

In 2010, Rochelle Hirschhorn was honored with the NYU Langone Medical Center’s Master Scientist Award. Dr. Hirschhorn, who was the center’s Chief of the Division of Medical Genetics for 24 years, has been a leader and role model in the advancement of women in medicine and genetics. In 1986, she was the first woman elected to the Interurban Clinical Club, founded in 1905, and soon was elected president of the group.

Her major discoveries include delineating the genetic structure and pathophysiology of adenosine deaminase (ADA) deficiency, an autosomal recessive metabolic disorder that causes immunodeficiency. She also described the phenomenon of reverse mutations as a cause of “self-cure” in ADA deficient patients and predicted the utility of gene therapy for ADA deficiency.

Kurt Hirschhorn has received multiple awards in genetics and pediatrics, including ASHG's Allan Award and Excellence in Education Award, the March of Dimes' Colonel Sanders Lifetime Achievement award and the Howland Award in Pediatrics. At Mount Sinai School of Medicine, he was the Chief of one of the first Divisions of Genetics for eight years and Chair of Pediatrics for 18 years. In addition to serving as a mentor to numerous trainees and faculty, he helped establish the first Masters level genetic counseling program at Sarah Lawrence College.

His major scientific achievements include discovery, characterization and application of the mixed-lymphocyte reaction and the early and sustained use of cytogenetics to discover and describe multiple human chromosomal disorders including the Wolf-Hirschhorn syndrome, also called the 4p- syndrome.

Drs. Hirschhorn, who have been married for over 60 years, have co-authored over 20 papers or chapters published during 1959 to 2011.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HUMAN GENETICS

Founded in 1948, the American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) is the primary professional membership organization for human genetics specialists worldwide. The nearly 8,000 members of ASHG include researchers, academicians, clinicians, laboratory practice professionals, genetic counselors, nurses and others involved in or with a special interest in human genetics. The Society's mission is to serve research scientists, health professionals and the public by providing forums to: (1) share research results through the Society's Annual Meeting and in The American Journal of Human Genetics (AJHG); (2) advance genetic research by advocating for research support; (3) educate current and future genetics professionals, health care providers, advocates, policymakers, educators, students and the public about all aspects of human genetics; and (4) promote genetic services and support responsible social and scientific policies. For more information about ASHG, visit: <http://www.ashg.org>.