

Five scientists honored for cancer therapy, immune system work

September 10 2019, by Malcolm Ritter



In this April 29, 2015 photo provided by the Lasker Foundation, Nurse Madelein Semo vaccinates a young baby at the Ngbaka health centre in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo as part of a project by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. The Lasker Foundation's 2019 public service award goes to Gavi, an international public-private partnership that works to expand global vaccine coverage for children. Since it was launched in 2000, the group has helped vaccinate more than 760 million children, the foundation said. (Phil Moore/Gavi via AP)

Five scientists have won prestigious medical awards for creating an innovative breast cancer treatment and discovering key players of the disease-fighting immune system.

They will share two \$250,000 awards from the Lasker Foundation, to be presented later this month in New York, the foundation announced Tuesday.

One prize honors the invention of Herceptin, a breast [cancer](#) treatment. The award will be shared by H. Michael Shepard and Axel Ullrich, who were with the biotech company Genentech when they did the research, and Dennis Slamon of the University of California, Los Angeles.

Herceptin transformed care for breast cancer when it was approved in 1998. It interferes with a protein called HER2 on the surface of breast cancer cells. The honorees' work, which began in the 1980s, included identifying HER2 as a driver of [breast cancer](#) and showing that Herceptin could help treat some cases of the disease.

The three scientists "conceived and executed a new blueprint for [drug discovery](#) that has already bestowed tens of thousands of women with time and quality of life," the foundation said.

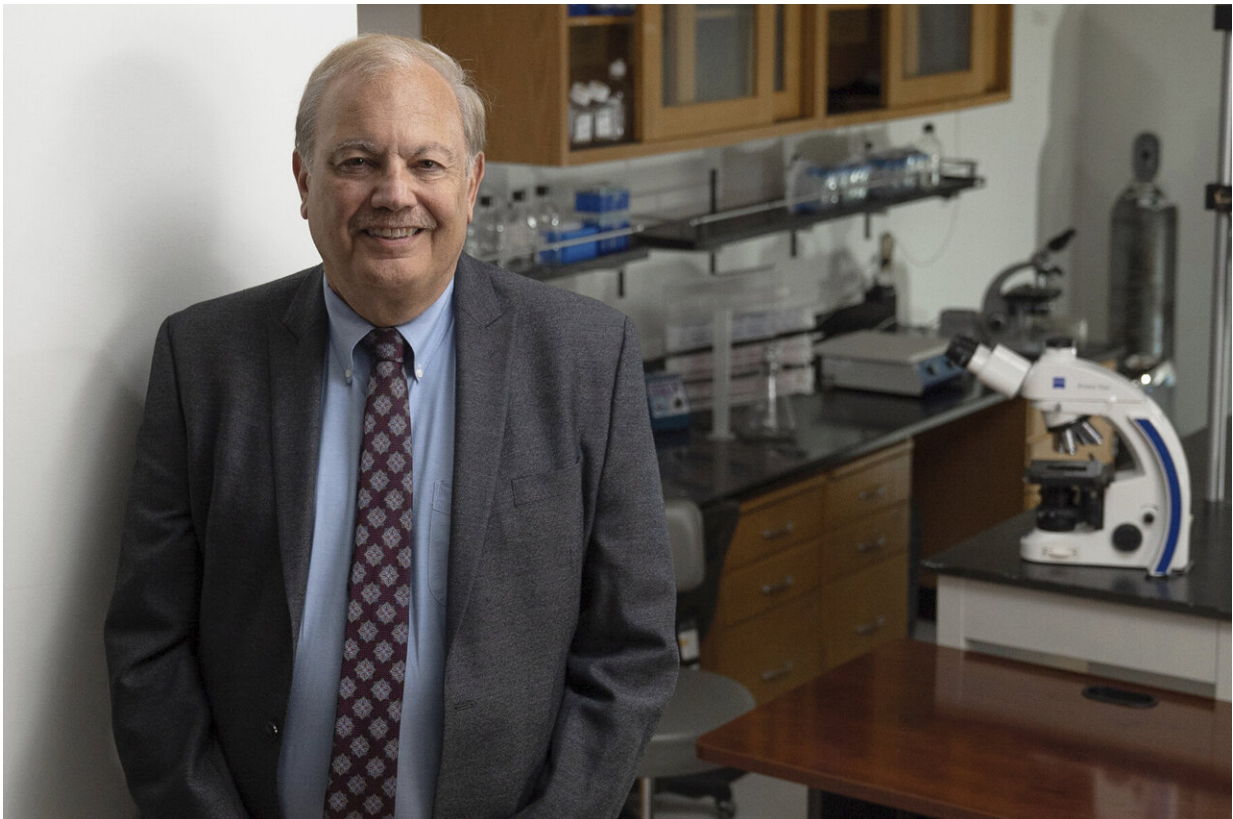
Shepard is now at Biooncology Consultants LLC in San Diego, and Ullrich at the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry in Martinsried, Germany.



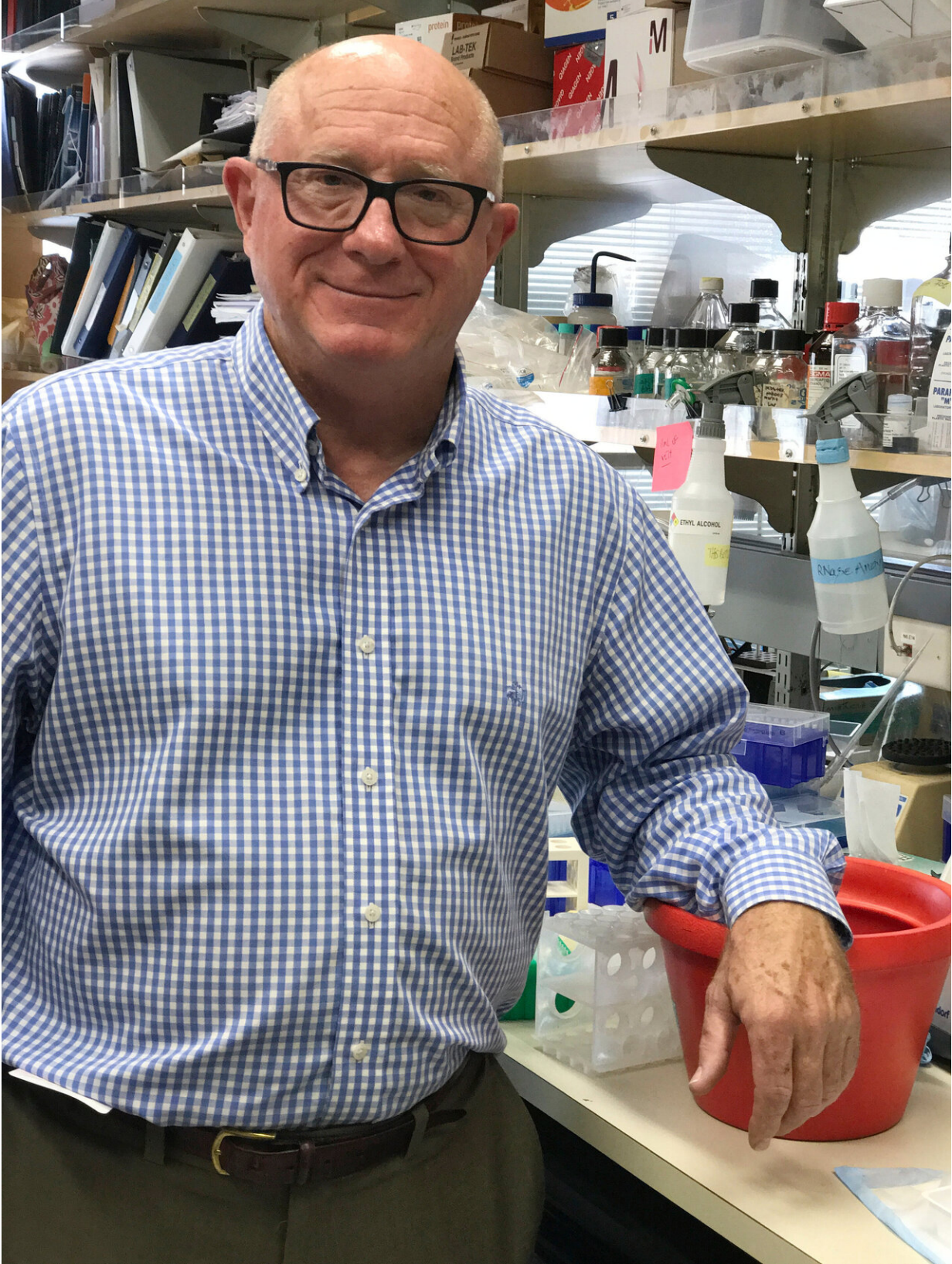
In this undated photo provided by the Lasker Foundation in September 2019, a health worker and other volunteers provide routine vaccines to the population of a tiny Haitian mountain village clinic called the Community Centre of Taifer, as part of a project by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. The Lasker Foundation's 2019 public service award goes to Gavi, an international public-private partnership that works to expand global vaccine coverage for children. Since it was launched in 2000, the group has helped vaccinate more than 760 million children, the foundation said. (Evelyn Hockstein/Gavi via AP)



This Feb. 25, 2008 photo provided by the Lasker Foundation in September 2019 shows Axel Ullrich. The 2019 Lasker Award for clinical research honors the invention of Herceptin, a breast-cancer treatment. The award will be shared by H. Michael Shepard and Ullrich, who were with the biotech company Genentech when they did the research, and Dennis Slamon of the University of California, Los Angeles. (Axel Griesch via AP)



This undated photo provided by the Lasker Foundation in September 2019 shows Dennis Slamon. The 2019 Lasker Award for clinical research honors the invention of Herceptin, a breast-cancer treatment. The award will be shared by H. Michael Shepard and Axel Ullrich, who were with the biotech company Genentech when they did the research, and Dennis Slamon of the University of California, Los Angeles. (Lasker Foundation via AP)



This undated photo provided by the Lasker Foundation in September 2019 shows H. Michael Shepard. The 2019 Lasker Award for clinical research honors the invention of Herceptin, a breast-cancer treatment. The award will be shared by Shepard and Axel Ullrich, who were with the biotech company Genentech when they did the research, and Dennis Slamon of the University of California, Los Angeles. (Lasker Foundation via AP)



This undated photo provided by the Lasker Foundation in September 2019 shows Max Cooper. The 2019 Lasker Award for basic medical research goes to Cooper of Emory University in Atlanta and Jacques Miller, an emeritus professor at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research in Australia. In work that began around 1960, they independently discovered two key classes of immune system cells, B and T cells, which "opened a new era of cellular immunology," the foundation said. (Lasker Foundation via AP)



This undated photo provided by the Lasker Foundation in September 2019 shows Jacques Miller. The 2019 Lasker Award for basic medical research goes to Max Cooper of Emory University in Atlanta and Miller, an emeritus professor at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research in Australia. In work that began around 1960, they independently discovered two key classes of

immune system cells, B and T cells, which "opened a new era of cellular immunology," the foundation said. (Cameron Wells/Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research via AP)

The other award goes to Max Cooper of Emory University in Atlanta and Jacques Miller, an emeritus professor at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research in Australia. In work that began around 1960, they independently discovered two key classes of [immune system](#) cells, B and T cells.

Their work set the stage for fundamental discoveries over the past 50 years, the foundation said. It also led to treatments for a wide range of illnesses, including cancer and [autoimmune disorders](#).

The foundation's public service award goes to the global vaccine alliance, Gavi, an international public-private partnership that works to expand global vaccine coverage for children. Since it was launched in 2000, the group has helped vaccinate more than 760 million children, the foundation said.

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