Albert Lasker Medical Research Award

1982 NOMINATION

☒ BASIC MEDICAL RESEARCH AWARD (Please check)

☐ CLINICAL MEDICAL RESEARCH AWARD (Please check)

INDICATE SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC CATEGORY OF THIS BASIC OR CLINICAL RESEARCH NOMINATION (E.G. CARDIOLOGY, IMMUNOLOGY, GENETICS, NEUROLOGY, NEUROBIOLOGY, PHARMACOLOGY, BIOCHEMISTRY, ENDOCRINOLOGY, MICROBIOLOGY, MOLECULAR BIOLOGY, AND OTHER CLINICAL CATEGORIES.):

Cardiology

NOMINATOR

NAME: Henry Blackburn, M.D.

TITLE: Professor and Director
Professor of Medicine

ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS:

Laboratory of Physiological Hygiene
School of Public Health
University of Minnesota
611 Beacon Street S.E., Stadium Gate 27
Minneapolis, MN. 55455
TELEPHONE: 612/376-4060

NOMINEE

NAME: Jeremiah Stamler, M.D.

TITLE: Professor and Chairman

ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS:

Department of Community Health & Preventive Medicine
Northwestern University Medical School
310 East Superior Street
Chicago, IL. 60611
TELEPHONE: 312/649-7914

SUMMARY OF NOMINEE'S SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Dr. Jeremiah Stamler is the leading researcher internationally in the prevention of major cardiovascular diseases. His contributions are central to modern understanding of physiological, metabolic, pathological, and lifestyle influences on the frequency, risk and prevention of atherosclerosis and hypertension. His design skills, methodological developments, leadership in major collaborative studies and trials, and the synthesis of research findings have led to much new knowledge and to its effective application to the public health.

PC: D. Bufferson 11/1/82

PLEASE ANSWER PRECISELY THE FOLLOWING THREE QUESTIONS REGARDING THE NOMINEE'S SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS: (Please type)

1) WHY DOES THIS WORK REPRESENT A MAJOR ADVANCE IN EITHER THE BASIC OR CLINICAL FIELDS?

Jeremiah Stamler's research on the epidemiology and prevention of coronary heart disease, hypertension and stroke represents a major advance in prevention of these diseases in high risk subgroups and in the whole population. He has brought to bear on the major prevention issues the several disciplines appropriate to the stage of knowledge: cardiology, experimental pathology, epidemiology, and clinical trials.

Dr. Stamler's work constitutes a major advance because it significantly increases knowledge about the influence of physical and behavioral characteristics on cardiovascular diseases, major public health issues of our time. His work elaborates the most effective clinical and educational strategies for reduction of risk factor levels and disease rates in the population. It provides a sound scientific base for public health policy.

His researches thus go further than testing hypotheses of cause by actually demonstrating feasibility, the degree of effect, and showing the most appropriate and cost-effective strategies for implementation in the population.

Dr. Stamler's direction of major clinical trials has been central to research on the control of high blood pressure, the prevention of complications of hypertension and the prevention of elevated blood pressure in the first place. His ability to ask the right questions, to design such studies, to direct them, analyze, present and apply them, are all unequalled in current day scientific enterprise.

Dr. Stamler's work in the secondary prevention of coronary heart disease as in the Coronary Drug Project Trial and a number of smaller undertakings, have been at the forefront in showing the relative ineffectiveness of the chronic drug approach to cholesterol-lowering post-infarction. This significant negative result has importantly influenced therapy and stimlulated the search for new strategies.

Dr. Stamler's work in the primary prevention of coronary heart disease, particularly in the Coronary Prevention Education Project, was the first multiple risk factor lowering study. He is a key leader in the Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial and has led the scientific effort to answer this important question about the preventive effect of multiple risk factor lowering strategies among the highest risk strata of male populations in this country.

Dr. Stamler's contributions to descriptive epidemiology, the basic science of preventive medicine, are outstanding in testing hypotheses of diet and lifestyle. His methodological work is central to the explanation of the low order correlations between individual risk factor levels or behavior and individual risk, within high risk North American populations. His technical innovations have been the first to reduce variance and to demonstrate true individual relationships within such homogeneous high risk cultures.

2) WHY DOES THE NOMINEE DESERVE AN AWARD, ESPECIALLY WHEN COMPARED TO OTHER SCIENTISTS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS IN HIS/HER FIELD?

Dr. Stamler's contributions are considered deserving of the Lasker Award because they stand head and shoulders over those of other investigators in the field by their duration and consistency, their logic leading from one question into another, their methodology at the edge of the technology, their scope including descriptive and experimental studies, individual small group and full population studies, and their prolific nature. His is one of the more highly productive of any medical institution -- or any individual investigator.

There is no other investigator in this field who has used to greater advantage multiple disciplines, multiple methods, multiple types of studies to answer basic and practical issues of the causes and prevention of the major cardiovascular diseases.

3) WHAT IS THE PRIORITY AND SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NOMINEE'S CONTRIBUTION AS COMPARED TO THE WORK IN THE FIELD AS A WHOLE?

The priority for honoring Dr. Stamler's contribution, it would seem to me, hinges on the importance of the issues he is addressing, on his productivity, and on the uniqueness of his scientific role and personality. He ties together explanatory and pragmatic research and carries it out to the fullest. He nurtures and handmaidens the results into effective applications for preventive practice and the public health.

Jeremiah Stamler's stamp on the world of cardiovascular epidemiology and prevention makes it difficult to isolate one work, or one contribution as priority over others. Many people would regard it a full career indeed to have directed and designed one such ambitious and well carried out undertaking as the Coronary Drug Project, the Hypertension Detection Follow-Up Trial, the Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial, or the People's Gas Company Study, and he has directed them and many others.

The priority of Dr. Stamler's contribution is the scope and intensity, the soundness, and the synthesis and translation into useful activity. For these reasons, I consider Jeremiah Stamler a uniquely outstanding candidate for recognition by a Lasker Award.