The Medico-Legal Society of Toronto is pleased to announce that Charles H. Tator is to be the recipient of the 2011 Medico-Legal Society Award. This award is the highest expression of esteem which the Society can convey and is intended to honour those members of the Medical, Legal or Scientific community who have made a significant contribution to their profession as well as either the Society or the community at large and whose contributions are consistent with the values of the Society.

Dr. Charles H. Tator graduated from the faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto, and trained there in research and neuropathology for which he received MA and PHD degrees. He then completed the Neurosurgery resident training program at the University of Toronto. In 1989, he became Chair of Neurosurgery, at the University of Toronto. He has been Head of Neurosurgery at Sunnybrook Hospital, the Toronto Western Hospital, and the University Health Network. He has trained a large number of neurosurgical residents in the hospitals and surgeon-scientists in his laboratory.

In 1992, Dr. Tator founded ThinkFirst Canada, a national brain and spinal cord injury foundation aimed at reducing the incidence of catastrophic brain and spinal cord injuries. He has published 321 papers in peer review journals and 85 book chapters, mostly in the field of brain and spinal cord injury. He developed the first acute spinal cord injury unit in Canada in 1974. He has performed research and written papers on the epidemiology, prevention and treatment of brain and spinal cord injury. He identified posttraumatic ischemia and other mechanisms of secondary injury in the pathophysiology of trauma to the nervous system. His acute cord clip compression model was one of the first clinically relevant spinal cord injury models in rodents. Currently, he is focused on the use of stem cells for regeneration of the spinal cord after trauma. He initiated and has held two research chairs at the University of Toronto, the Dan Family Chair in Neurosurgery and the Campeau Family-Charles Tator Chair in Brain and Spinal Cord Research.

Dr. Tator is a member of the Order of Canada, and an inductee into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame. At present, he is a Senior Scientist in the Toronto Western Research Institute and a Professor of Neurosurgery at the University of Toronto. He is the Director of the Canadian Paraplegic Association Spinal Cord Injury Research Laboratory in the Krembil Neuroscience Centre at the Toronto Western Hospital. In 2010, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Canadian Neurosurgical Society and the Ken Langford Lifetime Award of the Canadian Paraplegic Association. In 2011 he received the Lifetime Achievement Award of the American Spinal Injuries Association.

The Award will be presented at the Annual Dinner of the Society to be held on Wednesday May 18th at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel. The dinner speakers represent the Nobel Peace Prize winning humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières. Wendy Lai, MD., James Lane, LLB., and Luke Shankland will present on the theme: The Legal & Structural Challenges of Medical Action across Borders.

You can obtain tickets at www.mlst.ca or by calling the MLST at 416.523.4469

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