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July 12, 2006

CANADIAN NEUROSCIENTIST WINS INTERNATIONAL PRIZE FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN THE DELIVERY OF HEALTH CARE

TORONTO– Internationally renowned Canadian, Dr. Joseph B. Martin, Dean of the Harvard Faculty of Medicine, was named the inaugural winner of *The Henry G. Friesen International Prize in Health Research* today and will deliver a public lecture scheduled for September 26 at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa.

The new annual Prize offers a significant cash award and is a joint initiative of Friends of Canadian Institutes of Health Research (FCIHR) and the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS). The Prize recognizes exceptional innovation and vision by health leaders from around the world; traits exemplified by Dr. Henry Friesen, a renowned Canadian endocrinologist, medical scientist, and visionary in health research planning.

Dr. Martin, who was chosen for his creativity throughout his career, was selected from among a number of the world's most accomplished health research and health policy leaders. His contributions have included the fostering of new health service models that significantly enhance research and improve access to quality care.

“I am deeply honoured by this recognition from my colleagues in Canada,” said Dr. Martin, who as a neurologist and neuroscientist led the field in pituitary hormone research at McGill University and the Montreal Neurological Institute before becoming Professor at Harvard Medical School and Chief of Neurology at the Massachusetts General Hospital. In 1989, he was appointed Dean of Medicine, and then Chancellor, at the University of California at San Francisco. “The universal Canadian health care system, and the many visionary pioneers who helped build it, including Dr. Henry Friesen, have been an ongoing source of inspiration, direction and motivation for me.”

In 1997, Dr. Martin was recruited from San Francisco back to Harvard as Dean of Medicine where he led the unprecedented integration of seven Harvard institutions that created a new

paradigm in the approach to cancer research, diagnosis, prevention and treatment. He also established at Harvard a cohesive virtual institute of over 500 scientists and clinicians, many in diverse disciplines of research and clinical care, but all networked to advance teaching, research, and treatment in the area of brain disease.

“Achieving this complex collaboration among many competing agencies and health organizations was an extraordinary feat,” said Dr. Aubie Angel, President of FCIHR. “We are recognizing Joe Martin for his ability to map out new and effective systems of health research and health care delivery, but as well, his inordinate capacity to bring together the best and the brightest to work for a common goal. This collaborative model is similar to the approach taken by Dr. Friesen who was the creative force that led to the establishment of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research as well as Genome Canada.”

Dr. Martin was born in Bassano, Alberta and received his early medical education at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. He earned his PhD from the University of Rochester in 1971. Six years later he became Chair of the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery at McGill University in Montréal.

Dr. Martin’s public address in September is entitled “*Brain Disease: Health Research Policy for the Public Good*”. He is expected to speak on the overwhelming burden of mental illness and other debilitating brain diseases, and his vision of the shift in health care policy and practice needed to mitigate this burden. His talk will be aired subsequently on CBC Radio One.

FCIHR and CAHS established the Prize to engage public discourse and promote visionary changes in the delivery of health research policy as it relates to health care, economic opportunity, and social well being, as well as to recognize the distinguished leadership of Dr. Henry G. Friesen. “Henry Friesen’s pioneering contribution to medical research in this country is unparalleled,” said Dr. Paul Armstrong, President CAHS. “Perhaps no other individual has had such impact on health research and health policy in Canada since Tommy Douglas. It is fitting to recognize Dr. Martin among these Canadian icons as the inaugural Prize winner” continued Armstrong. “We are delighted that he also will enrich the annual meeting of CAHS in Ottawa with an address.”

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