



# DISCOVERY

Pioneering discovery to cure lupus



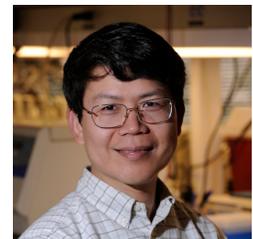
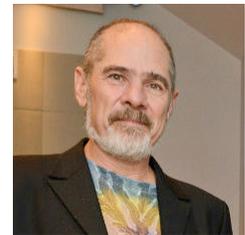
June 21, 2016

## Distinguished Innovators Innovate – Result: Breakthrough Discoveries in Lupus

One of the largest private grants for lupus research, Lupus Research Institute's Dr. William E. Paul Distinguished Innovator Awards in Lupus and Autoimmunity, provide up to \$1 million to exceptional scientists to support highly innovative studies into the fundamental causes of lupus that can provide new directions toward a cure.

Since its inception in 2012, recipients have already made major contributions to advancing our understanding of the disease. Here are just a few examples of significant discoveries from the Distinguished Innovators:

- **Douglas Green, Ph.D.**, Immunology Chair, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, discovered that when one of the processes responsible for disposing of the body's dead cells goes awry, it leads to lupus-like symptoms in mice. Following on from his study published this year in the journal *Nature*, he is researching how this insight into the process, called LAP, can lead to new treatments to reduce or even prevent the inflammation and autoimmune response characterized by lupus.
- **Zhijian 'James' Chen, Ph.D.**, Professor, UT Southwestern Medical Center, discovered a specific enzyme that when activated "sounds the alarm" for the autoimmune system to attack -- and then, when inhibited, "rescues them" from the disease. This breakthrough should facilitate development of new drugs to inhibit the cGAS enzyme and stop the autoimmune response.
- **Ken Smith, M.D., Ph.D.**, Professor, University of Cambridge, discovered that artificially exhausting certain immune cells, called CD8 T cells, renders them too tired to effectively attack the body, lessening disease progression and organ damage. The research was published last year in the prestigious academic journal *Nature*. Dr. Smith is currently developing tests that predict the course of the disease so treatment can be tailored to reduce side effects, lessen organ damage and slow the progression of the disease.



As the submission deadline of July 8 approaches, [LRI reminds scientists worldwide to submit proposals for next year's DIA awards.](#)

**“Join this select group of extremely creative scientists,” encourages LRI President and CEO Margaret G. Dowd. “Extraordinary diseases like lupus call for extraordinary minds capable of delivering extraordinary results.”**

**DONATE**  
for a life without lupus

**About the Lupus Research Institute**

The world's leading private supporter of innovative research in lupus, the LRI champions scientific risk-taking in the hunt for solutions to this complex and dangerous autoimmune disease.

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