



The University of Utah
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News Conference with Dr. Capecchi

Mon., Oct. 8, 10 a.m.

Eccles Institute of Human Genetics

1st floor – Auditorium

University of Utah

See below for parking arrangements

The news conference also will be streamed
live on the Internet at

healthcare.utah.edu/capecchi.

**MARIO CAPECCHI, UNIVERSITY OF UTAH GENE-TARGETING PIONEER,
WINS 2007 NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSIOLOGY OR MEDICINE**

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah -- Mario R. Capecchi, Ph.D., distinguished professor of human genetics and biology at the University of Utah's Eccles Institute of Human Genetics and a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator, has won the 2007 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

The announcement was made this morning by the Nobel Assembly at the Karolinska Institute, in Stockholm, Sweden. The prize recognizes Capecchi's pioneering development of "knockout mice" technology, a gene-targeting technique that has revolutionized the study of mammalian biology and allowed the creation of animal models for hundreds of human diseases, including the modeling of cancers in the mouse.

"This is a tremendous honor for our University, for our Department of Human Genetics, and, specifically, for all the members of my laboratory, past and present who have contributed to this work," said Capecchi upon receiving notification of the Nobel Prize early this morning. "The strong support and genuine interest of the University and Salt Lake City communities have been marvelous."

"It is a great honor to share this prize with Drs. Oliver Smithies and Martin Evans. We have all been very fortunate in having a longstanding scientific friendship and in being able to profoundly contribute to each other's work. This prize is a tribute to our collective efforts."

Smithies is at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Evans is at the University of Cardiff, Wales.

The Nobel tops a long list of prestigious honors for Capecchi, who, as a child, was forced to wander four years on the streets of Italy after the Nazis imprisoned his mother in a concentration camp. His achievements in gene targeting were recognized with the 2001 Albert Lasker Award for Basic Medical Research and the 2001 National Medal of Science, America's highest award for lifetime achievement in scientific research, presented by President George W. Bush. In 2003, he also received the Wolf Prize in Medicine, Israel's highest award for medical science, and the 2003 Pezcoller Foundation-AACR (American Association for Cancer Research) International Award for Cancer Research. Capecchi also received the 2005 March of Dimes Prize in Developmental Biology.

"The University of Utah proudly joins the Nobel Foundation and the entire international scientific community in congratulating Mario Capecchi on his outstanding scientific achievements," said University of Utah President Michael K. Young. "His accomplishments are particularly remarkable in light of the tremendous challenges he faced in his youth. He has drawn upon these life experiences to propel himself into doing the most extraordinary things—ultimately enabling people across the globe to live healthier, longer, and more productive lives. Mario Capecchi's groundbreaking work in gene targeting will have an incalculable impact on generations to come. We are deeply honored and grateful that he is one of ours."

Capecchi's development of gene targeting in mouse embryo-derived stem cells allows investigators to create mice with mutations in any desired gene and gives them virtually complete freedom to manipulate the DNA sequences in the genome of living mice.

Knockout technology makes possible detailed evaluation of the function of every mouse gene at any stage of development or in the adult. The technology not only has made possible the production of animal models for human disease, but it also is providing Capecchi and other researchers with insights into understanding fundamental biological questions, including development of the brain in the embryo or its function in the adult.

Capecchi was born in Verona, Italy, in 1937. His mother was imprisoned during World War II, but found him after the war and they eventually came to the United States to live with his aunt and uncle. Capecchi received his B.S. degree in chemistry and physics from Antioch College in 1961 and his Ph.D. in biophysics from Harvard University in

1967. He completed his thesis work under the guidance of Nobel laureate James D. Watson, who, along with Francis Crick, determined the structure of DNA. Capecchi became a junior fellow at Harvard and was an associate professor of biochemistry there when, in 1973, he left to join the University of Utah faculty.

A scientist at the Eccles Institute of Human Genetics at the University of Utah medical school, Capecchi also serves as co-chair of the Department of Human Genetics and is a founding member of the Brain Institute at the University of Utah. He holds the Helen Lowe Bamberger Colby and John E. Bamberger Presidential Endowed Chair in the Health Sciences at the U of U.

Capecchi is a member of the National Academy of Sciences. Among his numerous other honors are the Fifth Annual Bristol-Myers Squibb Award for Distinguished Achievement in Neuroscience Research (1992), Gairdner Foundation International Award for Achievements in Medical Science (1993), General Motors Corporation's Alfred P. Sloan Jr. Prize for Outstanding Basic Science Contributions to Cancer Research (1994), Kyoto Prize in Basic Sciences (1996), the Franklin Medal for Advancing Our Knowledge of the Physical Sciences (1997), and the University of Utah's Rosenblatt Prize for Excellence (1998).

For more information on the Nobel Prize see the Nobel Prize Web site: www.nobelprize.org. For more information on Mario Capecchi, see the University of Utah Health Sciences Center Web site: <http://healthcare.utah.edu/capecchi>; the University of Utah Department of Human Genetics Web site: www.genetics.utah.edu; or the University of Utah Genetic Science Learning Center Web site: <http://gslc.genetics.utah.edu>.

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NEWS CONFERENCE PARKING FOR MEDIA:

The Eccles Institute of Human Genetics is located southeast of University Hospital. Coming from 100 South, turn right onto Medical Drive West (the corner where Primary Children's Medical Center is located). Take the first left after the stoplight. The Eccles Institute is east of the colleges of pharmacy and nursing. Follow the road south of the two colleges until you come to a parking lot. Turn left there and watch for the parking attendants. Signs will be posted to guide you.