

For Immediate Release

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Keystone Symposia Announces New Three-Year Grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Includes Efforts to Bring in New Ideas, Expertise from Developing-Country Scientists

SILVERTHORNE, CO – November 5, 2009 – Keystone Symposia on Molecular and Cellular Biology is pleased to announce that it has received a second grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to fund conferences on infectious disease in its “Keystone Symposia Global Health Series.” In 2006, the Colorado, USA-based nonprofit organization received its first three-year grant; the funding for that ended with the October 20-25, 2009 conference on “Overcoming the Crisis of TB and AIDS” in Arusha, Tanzania. The new grant provides \$2.7 million over three years – or approximately \$900,000 per year.

A significant portion of the grant is used to fund Global Health Travel Awards for scientists, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows from developing countries where the health issue of the meeting topic is of particular relevance. Without these awards, most of these individuals would not be able to attend the conferences and acquire the valuable knowledge and collaborations that result. In its 2008-2009 season, Keystone Symposia provided 260 such awards to researchers from 43 developing countries.

The 2010 Keystone Symposia Global Health series consists of a conference on “*HIV Biology and Pathogenesis*” in Santa Fe, New Mexico in January 2010; a conference on “*Antibiotics and Drug Resistance: Challenges and Solutions*” in Santa Fe, New Mexico in January 2010; an “*HIV Vaccines*” meeting in Banff, Canada in March 2010; and concurrent meetings on “*Malaria: New Approaches to Understanding Host-Parasite Interactions*” and “*Molecular Targets for Control of Vector-Borne Diseases: Bridging Lab and Field Research*” scheduled for Copper Mountain, Colorado in April 2010.

To catalyze new thinking and approaches, the “*HIV Vaccines*” meeting, traditionally paired with the “*HIV Biology and Pathogenesis*” meeting, will instead be paired with a “*Viral Immunity*” meeting. Since an HIV vaccine is proving to be a particularly recalcitrant problem, the goal is to bring together virologists studying many other diseases and thereby facilitate a wider cross-fertilization of ideas.

In total, Keystone Symposia will feature 52 conferences in a diverse array of disciplines in its 39th meeting season, which runs from October 2009 through June 2010. Additional conference topics in 2010 include meetings on aging, autism, biochemistry, cancer, cardiovascular disease, development, drug design, diabetes/metabolic disease, genetics/genomics/epigenetics, immunology, stem cells, plant biology and structural biology.

Brand new topics in the 2010 series include meetings on “*Antibiotics and Resistance: Challenges and Solutions*,” “*Biomolecular Interaction Networks: Function and Disease*,” “*Cilia, Signaling and Human Disease*,” “*Metabolism and Cancer Progression*,” “*New Directions in Small Molecule Drug Discovery*,” “*RNA Silencing Mechanisms in Plants*” and “*Triglycerides and Triglyceride-Rich Particles in Health and Disease*.”

Additionally, a number of new locations will be featured in the line-up, including Arusha, Tanzania (for the Global Health meeting on TB and AIDS in October 2009); Ashmore, Australia (for a meeting on *"Telomere Biology and DNA Repair"* in October 2009); Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland (for a June 2010 meeting on *"Innate Immunity"*); and Kyoto, Japan (for a June 2010 meeting on *"Bioactive Lipids: Biochemistry and Diseases"*).

Seven Nobel Prize winners are scheduled to present during the 2010 meeting season, including one of the winners of this year's Nobel Prize in Chemistry, Thomas A. Steitz, who will present at the *"Antibiotics and Resistance"* conference. Additionally, one of the winners of the 2009 Lasker Basic Medical Research Award, Dr. Shinya Yamanaka, will co-organize and speak at the *"Stem Cells Differentiation and Dedifferentiation"* conference, and one of the winners of the Lasker~DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award, Dr. Charles L. Sawyers, will speak at the *"Nuclear Receptors: Signaling, Gene Regulation and Cancer"* conference.

In spite of the recent downturn in the global economy, Keystone Symposia conferences remain popular and well attended. In its 2008-2009 season, the organization set a new record for total attendance with nearly 14,000 participants at 57 symposia. According to James W. Aiken, Ph.D., Keystone Symposia's Chief Executive Officer, "The potential financial consequences to us of the world economic situation reinforced the critical importance of making our conferences the most valuable of the ones scientists might choose to attend."

Keystone Symposia aims to make its conferences open, accessible and affordable to all. Discounted registration fees are offered to students. Rates are the same for attendees from both industry and academia, and discounted lodging packages have been negotiated for most locations. Registration fees include participation in all plenary and poster sessions plus workshops when available, the meeting program/abstract book and a number of meals (usually breakfasts and evening receptions).

Conferences are typically three to four full days in length. Many afternoons are free for unstructured leisure and networking activities. Submission of an abstract is not required, but it is encouraged as organizers typically select short talk speakers based on abstract submission. This presents a means for early-career scientists to be featured on the programs along with established experts. Abstracts and posters represent an ideal opportunity to gain exposure for one's research.

The conferences are planned based on a rigorous peer-review process more than 18 months in advance, tapping into the expertise of a Scientific Advisory Board comprised of more than 60 leading life scientists from around the world and supplemented by the input of Programming Consultants. Some topics such as HIV recur annually, while others are offered every two years.

Some meetings are held jointly with another to stimulate a greater cross-fertilization of ideas. Two to four scientists are asked to volunteer as each meeting's program organizers, and there is a deliberate attempt to vary these from one occurrence of the meeting to the next, as well as to include female and underrepresented minority scientists, to encourage diversity and a broader perspective.

Further financial assistance is available to graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and those from less developed countries. In 2010, Keystone Symposia hopes to award a record number of scholarships. In the 2009 meeting series, it awarded 635 scholarships and 46 underrepresented minority scholarships in addition to the 260 Global Health Travel Awards. These scholarships and awards make attendance possible for many who would otherwise not be able to attend and are generously supported by corporate, foundation, government and individual donors.

Those interested in attending a Keystone Symposia conference should keep in mind that scholarship application and abstract submission deadlines typically precede a meeting by four months, late-breaking abstract deadlines by three months and early registration deadlines by two months. Signing up by the early registration deadline saves US\$100 on the later registration fee.

About Keystone Symposia

Keystone Symposia on Molecular and Cellular Biology, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, has been conducting internationally renowned, open scientific conferences since 1972 and has been headquartered in Summit County, Colorado since 1990, when the organization left the University of California at Los Angeles. Annually, Keystone Symposia holds more than 50 meetings involving more than 13,000 scientists from around the world. Registration fees are supplemented by generous monetary support from corporate, foundation and individual donors as well as government grants.

More information on Keystone Symposia can be found at www.keystonesymposia.org, and full details on the 2010 meeting series can be viewed at www.keystonesymposia.org/2010meetings.