ALL ACADEMICS AND STAFF AT UCSD (including UCSD Medical Center)
ALL STUDENTS AT UCSD

SUBJECT:  Death of Dr. Leon Thal, Renowned Alzheimer's Expert at UC San Diego

It is with deep regret and sadness that we've received confirmation that Dr. Leon Thal died in a plane crash on Saturday evening. Dr. Thal was Chair of the Department of Neurosciences, Director of the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, and a Distinguished Professor. He joined the UC San Diego faculty in 1985 as an Associate Professor, was promoted to Professor in 1989 and became Chair in 1993. His contributions to his field and to this university are innumerable and invaluable.

An expert on memory loss, cognitive defects and gene therapy, Dr. Thal directed the Alzheimer's Clinical Trials group, an NIH-funded nationwide consortium of more than 70 centers that test experimental therapies for Alzheimer's disease. He also served on the National Institute of Aging Advisory Council (2002-2006) and served as permanent advisor on the FDA anti-dementia assessment team. In December 2004, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Dr. Thal to serve on the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine. His many other honors include receiving the Arthur Cherkin Memorial Award in 2003, and the Potamkin Prize for Research in Pick's, Alzheimer's, and Related Diseases in 2004.

Dr. Thal was a valued and loved member of the UCSD family. Our thoughts are with his family, friends and coworkers during this difficult time.

The family suggests contributions in lieu of flowers to the charity of the giver's choice. Plans for memorial services are still pending.

Marye Anne Fox
Chancellor
David N. Bailey
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