I thank each attendee at our most successful 59th Annual Fall Conference and Scientific Sessions in September in Washington, D.C. We set a council record for attendance. Perhaps more importantly, we set a high mark for the quality and enthusiasm of the scientific exchange, which has come to be recognized as the signature of the Council for High Blood Pressure Research. I thank our Program Committee Chair, Gabby Navar, and the committee for planning and conducting such an outstanding meeting. I also thank Robin Davisson and J. R. Haywood for organizing and co-chairing the Workshop on Emerging Concepts on Neural Interactions in Hypertension, which was well attended and intellectually invigorating. For the entire meeting, the level of energy was high and the science presented was imaginative and relevant. It is clear that the Council for High Blood Pressure Research is the best place in the world to present, discuss and learn basic, translational and clinical science related to hypertension.

Our congratulations go to several of this year’s major AHA and council award winners: Ken Bernstein and Barry Brenner for the Novartis Award for Hypertension Research, the highest award of council; Tito Nasjletti for the Irvin Page – Alva Bradley Lifetime Achievement Award of Council; Carlos Ferrario for the Corcoran Lecture Award; Jeff Garvin for the Lewis K. Dahl Lecture Award presented at the AHA Scientific Sessions; Annette J. Dahly-Vernon for the Goldblatt Award; Richard Lifton, for the AHA Distinguished Scientist Award; and John Hall for the AHA Distinguished Achievement Award. In addition, we extend our congratulations to the many trainees and new investigators who received travel awards from our generous corporate sponsors. Finally, our council honored Hans Brunner with a symposium celebrating his career of extraordinary achievement in the field of hypertension.

I want to call your attention to several upcoming activities and events sponsored by the Council for High Blood Pressure Research. The AHA Prevention VIII Conference: Kidney Disease, Hypertension and Cardiovascular Disease will be held January 26–28, 2006 at the Wyndham Orlando Resort in Orlando, Fla. It is not too early to start planning for the 60th Annual Fall Conference of the Council for High Blood Pressure Research, which will be held in San Antonio, Texas, October 4–7, 2006. Please mark your calendar and plan to submit abstracts and attend. Under the leadership of Michael Moore, the Council is planning its second Clinical Management of Hypertension course to be held October 11, 2006, in Charlotte, NC. Under the leadership of Stephanie Watts, the council also is preparing for the next Hypertension Summer School to be held in the summer of 2007.

This year, our council has decided to initiate a new organization for trainees in hypertension research. An Advocacy Committee for Trainees will be organized and the trainee leader of this committee will be a new member of the council’s Leadership Committee. In addition, the council has appointed a new Advocacy Ambassador, J. R. Haywood, who will be a member of the AHA Advocacy Committee, will organize our lobbying efforts for such issues as NIH funding. We especially thank J.R. for volunteering to take on this important task.

As you have no doubt already perceived, the Council for High Blood Pressure Research is a vibrant scientific organization with major contributions to the practice of medicine. Because hypertension is the most common reason for non-pregnant adults to make office visits to physicians in the United States, our work is of major importance to the health of this nation. The morbidity and mortality of hypertension is the force that drives all of us to discover and learn together.

Changes in Eligibility for the Goldblatt Award

L. Gabriel Navar, PhD
Chair, Program Committee

The Goldblatt Award will now be specifically to honor newly independent investigators who have assumed a faculty or staff position. The applicants must submit their application material when they submit their abstract for the Council for High Blood Pressure Research Annual Meeting. Based on the overall records of the investigators and the quality of the abstracts, three finalists will be selected by the awards committee. The finalists will receive travel awards to attend the meeting. The winner will be selected by the awards committee based on his or her oral presentation. The award will thus be made in the same year as the application was submitted.
Irvine Page and Alva Bradley were the visionary leaders who gave birth to the organization that eventually became the Council for High Blood Pressure Research. This council has been at the heart of my professional life since 1969, when I attended the council’s Fall meeting for the first time, at the invitation of my mentor, Dr. George M.C. Masson. To say that I am happy and gratified at being selected to receive the 2005 Irvine Page–Alva Bradley Lifetime Achievement Award of our council is a gross understatement. In fact, I am honored beyond my wildest dreams, and for this I am indebted to Drs. Carey and Navar, and to the members of the council’s Award Committee.

In accepting this award, I pay homage to those distinguished scientists, from Aram Chobanian in 1999 to John McGiff in 2004, who preceded me as Lifetime Achievement Award recipients, and commit myself to uphold the high standards of professional excellence they have set for us to follow. I also wish to acknowledge events and people that have influenced my personal and professional life, in fact contributing to create the favorable circumstances that have brought me to this point in my career.

The first event took place in early 1962 when I met and fell in love with the woman who has been my better half for close to four decades. Norma Nasjletti, my dearest wife, has been at my side on good days, when the experiments yielded exciting data and new insights, and on bad days, when everything that could go wrong went wrong and when wonderful papers that had been written with tender love and care were rejected with contemptuous disdain. She kept me grounded, and I know I would not be standing at this podium today without the support she gave me day in and day out over all these years.

The second event took place a few months later when, prompted by the need for cash, I applied for a research assistantship in the Department of Pathophysiology at the School of Medicine of Universidad de Cuyo, my alma mater. The Head of the Department, Dr. Juan Carlos Fasciolo, was known internationally for his pioneering work on the function and regulation of the renin-angiotensin system. That was a golden period for science in Argentina and Fasciolo was a master scientist and leader. I was fortunate to obtain the position I was seeking, and even more fortunate for being assigned to work with a young scientist you know well: Dr. Oscar A. Carretero. While Dr. Fasciolo was a role model, Dr. Carretero was a taskmaster who taught me the ABC’s of experimentation and hypothesis testing. Along the way, I also learned much from other young scientists pursuing dreams of discovery in the department. Number one among them was Dr. Juan Carlos Romero. His vicissitudes studying renin secretion in isolated blood perfused kidneys gave me reason to believe that I should not complain about my unyielding experiments, as Carlos did not have it any better. That was an eventful period which, as I came to recognize years later, molded the scientist in me. I know I would not be at this event today without the mentoring influence provided by Drs. Fasciolo and Carretero and the contagious love for science emanating from Carlos Romero and other members of the gang.

The third event took place in 1968, when Dr. Carretero recommended me to Dr. George M.C. Masson for a research fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic Research Foundation. The Cleveland Clinic was the Mecca of hypertension research at the time, with brilliant scientists such as Merlin Bumpus (who had replaced Dr. Irvine Page as chairman of the Research Division),
George Masson, Harriet Dusgan, James McCubbin, Philip Khairallah, Robert Tarazzi, and Edward D. Frohlich, and a cadre of creative young scientists that included Drs. Carlos Ferrario, Michael Peach, Ruben Bunag, and Subba Sen. Dr. George Masson had achieved international recognition for his work linking renin to the mechanisms of hypertension-induced vascular disease. He was a superior mentor who provided me with the necessary freedom, support and guidance to conduct studies on the factors affecting the hepatic synthesis of angiotensinogen. The Cleveland Clinic offered me a superb training experience, and I learned much from everyone at the Research Division. I know I would not be here today without the mentoring influence provided by Drs. George Masson, Merlin Bumpus and all the other members of the Research Division.

The fourth event took place in late 1971. It began at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, continued at the University of Tennessee in Memphis, and still is going on at New York Medical College. As my fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic was ending, Dr. Philip Khairallah recommended me to Dr. John C. McGiff, who had just been appointed director of clinical pharmacology at the Medical College of Wisconsin. Dr. McGiff, who had just been appointed director of clinical pharmacology at the Medical College of Wisconsin. Dr. McGiff had just reported that bradykinin was a potent stimuli for renal prostaglandin synthesis, and I believe my background in kinin research opened the door of his division to me. It was my good fortune that he offered me a junior position as member of the faculty. I accepted without hesitation, without inquiring about either salary or seed money. It could not have turned out any better. The research environment was exceptional, as Dr. McGiff had assembled a group of young scientists with various backgrounds and unmatched enthusiasm for science. Angiotensin, kinins, prostaglandins, blood pressure and renal function were keywords in our dreams and we translated those dreams into experiments. Drs. Kafait U. Malik, Norberto Terragno, Alicia Terragno and Andrew Lonigro were part of the team, and I learned from each and every one of them in a manner that was unanticipated at the time. My association with Dr. Malik has endured to this day, and is rare the day we do not call each other to talk about experiments. Over the past 17 years I have developed equally nurturing professional relationships with colleagues at New York Medical College. Drs. Michal Schwartzman, Nader Abraham, Wen-hui Wang, Thomas Hintze, Michael Wolin and Michael Goligorsky have taught me much and enlarged my outlook of science. I know I would not be at this event today without the mentoring influence provided by Dr. McGiff in my early years as an independent investigator. He taught me to write grants, introduced me to eicosanoid research, and provided me with an exciting research environment. I also know I would not be here today without the support and the give-and-take provided by my friends and colleagues, Drs. Malik, Schwartzman, Abraham and Wang.

Over the years, I have been privileged to work with many young scientists who came to my laboratory while pursuing doctoral or postdoctoral training. Almost without exception, I learned more from them than they learned from me. I am grateful to them because they contributed immensely, with their hard work and ideas, to the research conducted in my laboratory. I know I would not be here today without the contributions of past and present young co-workers including Drs. Debra Diz, William Sessa, Patrick Pagano, Fan Zhang, Victoria Cachofeiro, Andrew Powers, Robert Johnson, Fruszima Johnson, Nobuhiko Togashi, Jun-Ichi Kaide, Lang Lin, Francisca Rodriguez and many others.

Also, my colleagues in the scientific community at large contributed in innumerable ways to my research. Many of you helped my work by providing reagents, suggestions and criticism. I am particularly grateful to a reviewer who in rejecting one of my papers indicated that in doing so he or she was protecting the scientific reputation of the authors. You were correct, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I thank all of you for the kindness and consideration you have given me over the years.

And so, ladies and gentlemen, it should be apparent to you by now that whatever my professional accomplishments are, they are not mine alone. They are shared with many people — family members, mentors, students, and colleagues — who are part of my personal world.

Thank you for your attention and for sharing this very special moment with me.”