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NIH Official Wins Prestigious Prize

By Miranda S. Spivack

Anthony S. Fauci, a pioneering AIDS researcher, bioterrorism expert and high-ranking official at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, was one of four scientists named yesterday to receive the prestigious Lasker Foundation awards for medical research.

Fauci, 66, who received the Mary Woodard Lasker public service award, has headed the \$4.4 billion National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at NIH for nearly 23 years.

He will receive the \$150,000 award at a ceremony in New York this month. He said yesterday that he was "humbled and gratified" to be cited for public service.

Two surgeons who developed prosthetic heart valves, Alain Carpentier of Paris and Albert Starr of Portland, Ore., were selected as Albert Lasker award winners in clinical research.

More than 300,000 people a year

worldwide get heart valves replaced in what is the second most common heart surgery in the United States, the foundation said.

Ralph M. Steinman of Rockefeller University in New York was awarded the Albert Lasker prize for basic medical research for discovering dendritic cells, which initiate the body's response to foreign antigens.

Albert Lasker, an advertising executive, and his wife, Mary, a noted art collector, founded the awards more than 60 years ago to raise public awareness of the value of biomedical research. The Lasker prizes are considered the nation's most prestigious for medicine.

Fauci, a District resident, who received a National Medal of Science from President Bush this year, has served as a key White House adviser in the fight against bioterrorism, helping lead efforts to develop vaccines and drugs to counter potential bioterrorist microbes such as anthrax, smallpox and Ebola.

Fauci also helps direct the president's emer-

gency plan for AIDS relief, focused in sub-Saharan African and other parts of the Third World. Fauci said much of his recent work has focused on trying to stem AIDS transmission from mother to child.

The Lasker Foundation cited Fauci as "a world-class investigator" who "has spoken eloquently on behalf of medical science to the public, Congress and successive administrations."

At NIH, Fauci oversees a research program aimed at preventing, diagnosing and treating infectious diseases. He also has his own lab to conduct research.

Fauci graduated from College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass., received his medical degree from Cornell University and joined NIH in 1968.

Fauci said he and his wife, Christine, would probably use the award to help pay for college tuition for their three daughters. "It's called 'sending your children to school,' " he said with a chuckle.