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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FLOYD E. BLOOM WINS 2005 SARNAT PRIZE IN MENTAL HEALTH

WASHINGTON — The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies has awarded the 2005 Rhoda and Bernard Sarnat International Prize in Mental Health to Floyd E. Bloom, chairman, chief executive officer, and chief scientific officer of Neurome Inc., La Jolla, Calif. Consisting of a medal and \$20,000, the prize will be presented at the IOM's annual meeting.

The Sarnat Prize is being given to Bloom in recognition of the international scope and significance of his contributions to biological sciences, neuroscience in particular. Bloom was one of the first neurobiologists to appreciate the need for in-depth study of the roles and functions of the brain's neurotransmitters, and to elucidate the roles and interactions of specific neurotransmitter systems. His research teams were the first to identify a number of genes expressed exclusively in the brain. His work led to key revelations about the interaction between medications and neurotransmitters, as well as how alcohol and other addictive substances act on the brain. Bloom also pioneered applications of software programs and databases that aid in the imaging and analysis of neurological functions. Based on his conviction that pinpointing gene expressions in the brain will lead to new understanding of neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, Bloom co-founded a biotechnology firm called Neurome Inc. in 2000 that seeks new ways to diagnose and treat these diseases.

In addition to his research pursuits, Bloom served five years as editor in chief of *Science*, where he led the publication into the Internet age by overseeing the development of an online version of the journal. Bloom further expanded the journal's readership by partnering with scientific associations overseas to appeal to an international audience and make *Science* accessible to other nations.

Bloom was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1977 and the Institute of Medicine in 1982. From July 1989 until March 2005, Bloom served as chairman and professor of the department of neuropharmacology at Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, Calif. He has been president of the Society for Neuroscience, the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Bloom also has been elected a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society, and received numerous awards and honorary degrees. He has written more than 600 publications and co-authored multiple editions of textbooks on neuropsychopharmacology.

Bloom received his undergraduate degree from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, and went on to receive an M.D. from Washington University in St. Louis. After completing an internship with Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, his interest in pharmacology led him to seek further training at the National Institute of Mental Health's Clinical Neuropharmacological Research Center. It was there that Bloom began his studies of the fundamental mechanisms of the nervous system.

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The Institute of Medicine has awarded the Sarnat Prize since 1992 to individuals, groups, or organizations that have demonstrated outstanding achievement in improving mental health. The prize recognizes – without regard for professional discipline or nationality – achievements in basic science, clinical application, and public policy that lead to progress in the understanding, etiology, prevention, treatment, or cure of mental disorders, or to the promotion of mental health. As defined by the nominating criteria, the field of mental health encompasses neuroscience, psychology, social work, public health, nursing, psychiatry, and advocacy.

The award is supported by an endowment created by Rhoda and Bernard Sarnat of Los Angeles. Rhoda Sarnat is a licensed clinical social worker, and Bernard Sarnat is a plastic and reconstructive surgeon and researcher. The Sarnats' concern about the destructive effects of mental illness inspired them to establish the award.

Nominations for potential recipients are solicited every year from IOM members, deans of medical schools, and mental health professionals. Nominations for the 2006 prize can be sent to Leslie Baer at <sarnataward@nas.edu>.

The Institute of Medicine is a private, nonprofit organization that provides health policy advice under a congressional charter granted to the National Academy of Sciences.

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