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Worldwide hearing implant leader MED-EL Medical Electronics announced that Founder and CEO Ingeborg Hochmair, PhD, has been selected to receive this year's prestigious Lasker-De-Bakey Clinical Medical Research Award for the development of the modern cochlear implant, a device that restores hearing to individuals with severe-to-profound deafness through electrical stimulation of the auditory nerve. She will share the award with Graeme M. Clark (Emeritus, Univ. of Melbourne, Australia) and Blake S. Wilson (Duke University, Nc, USA). This highly respected scientific award honors scientists whose contribution have improved the clinical treatment of patients.

Ingeborg Hochmair, a PhD in electrical engineering, is being recognised for her early contributions to the field of cochlear implants starting with the development of the world's first multi-channel microelectronic cochlear implant that was implanted in Vienna in 1977. With a modified version of this device, the next milestone was reached in 1979: the understanding of words and sentences without lip-reading in a quiet environment via a small, body worn sound processor. Intense and continuous innovation followed, including the development of the world's first behind-the-ear (BTE) cochlear implant audio processor in 1991.

"Many of these achievements were attained with the shared commitment of my husband and closet collaborator, electrical engineer Erwin Hochmair, and with other outstanding partners, such as basic researchers, surgeons, clinicians, and co-workers at MED-EL and, ultimately, the end-users of the devices," said Dr. Hochmair.

Dr. Hochmair and the entire MED-EL family extended congratulations to her fellow research Award recipients, Graeme M.Clark and Blake S. Wilson. "I'm extremely gratified that our life's work is being recognised in such a prestigious manner," said Dr. Hochmair.

However, I'm even more pleased that this award will raise awareness for the entire field of cochlear implants and its importance as a treatment for small children born with severe to profound hearing loss, up to and including older adults who lose their hearing later in life. In so many ways, our work has just begun. Technological advances have accelerated our research at an unbelievable rate. We are on the threshold of breakthroughs that would have been considered dreams not long ago." she added.

The award ceremony will take place in New York city Friday, September 20, 2013.