Former JLab Director Honored with Prestigious Slack Award

WASHINGTON, DC – Hermann Grunder, founding director of the U.S. Department of Energy’s Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility, has been awarded a Francis G. Slack Award by the Southeastern Section of the American Physical Society in recognition of his outstanding career and contributions to physics.

Grunder, who served as director of Jefferson Lab from 1985 to 2000, received the award Friday during the 79th annual meeting of the APS Southeastern Section in Tallahassee, Fla.

Grunder was the deputy director of the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory in California when he was recruited to lead the design, construction and operation of Jefferson Lab, then known as the Continuous Electron Beam Accelerator Facility, in Newport News, Va. As the lab’s first director, he commissioned an internal review of the design plans and brought forward a recommendation that the accelerator be based on superconducting technology. It was a bold move that he promoted beyond DOE to the Office of Science & Technology Policy (OSTP) and the Office of Management & Budget (OMB). In the end, the decision to deploy superconducting technology proved to be a brilliant success, paving the way for other large-scale installations around the world to utilize the technology.

As director, Grunder also launched faculty joint appointments and bridge appointments at Jefferson Lab. “These have served as model initiatives for many other facilities. Since the establishment of these programs through Hermann’s tenure, over 70 new faculty lines have been added in nuclear physics in the Southeast,” according to Jerry P. Draayer, president and CEO of Southeastern Universities Research Association, (SURA) who nominated Grunder for the award. Draayer received the Slack Award in 2006.

After Jefferson Lab, Grunder served as director of Argonne National Laboratory from 2000 to 2005. Born in Basel, Switzerland, Grunder received his mechanical engineering degree from the University of Karlsruhe (Germany) and his Ph.D. in experimental nuclear physics from the University of Basel. He started his U.S. physics career at Lawrence Berkeley Lab in 1968.

Francis G. Slack was a distinguished Vanderbilt University scientist and a charter member of the Southeastern Section, the largest regional section in the APS. The award in his name was established in 2000 to recognize those who have worked unselfishly to: (1) bring about significant new research facilities in the region; (2) significantly strengthen and raise the stature of particular departments of physics in the region; (3) provide significant leadership and work to strengthen and build the Section and other physics societies and regional organizations; (4) develop physics consortia of universities and/or research institutions that have benefited the region and the nation; and, (5) carry out other service and administrative activities such as organizing major conferences held in the region, international exchanges, and public outreach to K-12.

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The Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) is a consortium of over 60 leading research institutions in the southern United States and the District of Columbia. It operates the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility for the U.S. Department of Energy through Jefferson Science Associates – a SURA/Computer Sciences Corporation joint venture. SURA was established in 1980 as a non-stock, nonprofit corporation. SURA serves as an entity through which colleges, universities, and other organizations may cooperate with one another, and with government and industry in acquiring, developing, and using laboratories and other research facilities and in furthering knowledge and the application of that knowledge in the physical, biological, and other natural sciences and engineering. For more information, visit www.sura.org.