national science strategy, so who are we trying to kid?" asks Paul Hough, executive director of the Canadian Consortium for Research, an association of scientific lobbies.

But universities realize that some collaboration is inevitable, if not also desirable, says Brown. "Budget cuts have forced it," she says. "It's not often national in scope, but there's certainly a lot more of this stuff going on."

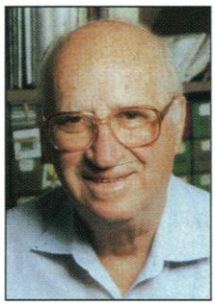
Strangeway acknowledges that there are a host of potential political land mines. But he says the CFI must exercise "due diligence" in ensuring that taxpayers "get the best return on intellectual activity." And Chad Gaffield, president of the Humanities & Social Sciences Federation of Canada, agrees that half a billion dollars provides a strong impetus for collaboration: "They have a lot of money as a carrot, so, presumably, there is a very good incentive to get this worked out." **–WAYNE KONDRO**

Wayne Kondro writes from Ottawa.

SCIENTIFIC PRIZES

Lasker Awards Go to Cancer Researchers

Seven biologists received coveted Albert Lasker Medical Research Awards this week. The award for basic research went to three scientists in recognition of their contributions toward understanding cell division mechanisms, while three others shared the clinical prize for their studies on the genetic basis of cancer. In addition, former *Science* Editor-in-Chief Daniel E. Koshland Jr. received a separate Lasker award for lifetime achievement in medical research. Although not the most lucrative awards—this year's basic and clinical winners get $10,000 each—the Laskers are considered highly prestigious because they frequently foreshadow the Nobel Prize. Indeed, 59 Lasker winners have gone on to win Nobels.



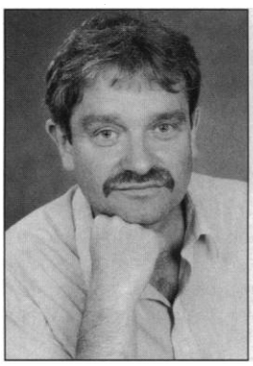
Lifetime achiever. Daniel E. Koshland Jr.

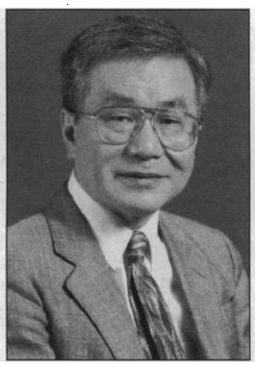
The chair of the jury that selected the winners, Joseph Goldstein of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, who is himself both a Lasker and a Nobel Prize winner, says that the current awardees "really provided the foundation" for understanding both normal cell division and the genetic errors that cause it to go awry, as happens in cancer. The winners for basic research—Yoshio Masui, a professor emeritus of zoology at the University of Toronto; Lee Hartwell, director of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle; and Paul Nurse, director-general of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund in London—helped tease out the many components of the biochemical machinery that drives cell division.

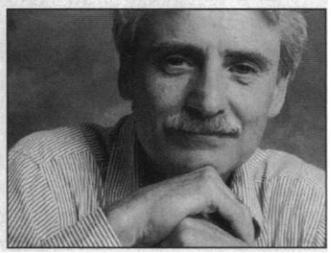
Masui provided the first clue with his 1971 discovery of the then-uncharacterized maturation promoting factor (MPF), which stimulates cell division in frog eggs. Then, Hartwell and Nurse, working with two different yeast species, identified a series of genes involved in regulating cell division in those organisms and, as they and others showed, in other species as well. In fact, one of the genes turned out to encode a component of Masui's MPF.

The winners of the clinical award—Alfred Knudson Jr., former president of the Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia; Peter Nowell of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in Philadelphia; and Janet Rowley of the University of Chicago Medical Center—examined how genetic abnormalities may trigger cancer. Nowell and Rowley proved that leukemia could be caused by faulty genes, while Knudson showed that development of certain childhood cancers requires mutations in both copies of the genes at fault, a finding that led to the idea of tumor suppressor genes, currently one of the hottest topics in cancer research.

And finally, Koshland, currently a biochemist at the University of California, Berkeley, was honored for his work on enzyme regulation and cell signaling systems, as well as his efforts to reshape biology studies at Berkeley and his success at improving the quality of *Science*. **–JENNIFER COUZIN**







Cell cycle pioneers. From left to right are Paul Nurse, Yoshio Masui, and Lee Hartwell.

U.K. ASTRONOMY

300-Year-Old RGO Finally to Close

LONDON—Like Lewis Carroll's Cheshire cat, which disappeared leaving only its grin, one of Britain's oldest scientific institutions will vanish next month leaving only its name. The 300-year-old Royal Greenwich Observatory (RGO) in Cambridge, which provides technical and scientific support for Britain's astronomers, will close in October as part of cost-cutting measures by the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC). Far from leaving a grin, however, the loss has left many astronomers grimacing. "The closure sends a very unfortunate signal to our foreign colleagues, students, and the public about the status of British astronomy," says Britain's Astronomer Royal, Martin Rees.

After reviews of Britain's home-based astronomy facilities over 15 years, RGO finally lost out last year in a contest with the Royal Observatory Edinburgh to become Britain's single Astronomy Technology Centre (ATC), serving telescopes in the Canary Islands and Hawaii (*Science*, 13 June 1997, p. 1641). The ATC opens officially next month. The former science minister, John Battle, backed the decision but asked the council to try to find a way of saving the name of the RGO in some form. However, to stay afloat as a semi-independent scientific institution, RGO staff developed a business plan for telescope design and construction and discussed the possibility of closer links with Cambridge University.

But at the end of last year, PPARC finally decided to close the observatory, in part because of worries that a reconfigured RGO might end up in competition with the new ATC (*Science*, 19 December 1997, p. 2049). PPARC says the closure will release an extra $3.2 million for astronomy research over the next 4 years and $6.5 million each year after that.

PPARC and the government are now discussing plans to transfer the RGO name back to its original site in Greenwich, southeast London. The old observatory at Greenwich, straddling the Greenwich Meridian at zero degrees longitude, is now a museum and will house new public exhibitions on astronomy under a plan agreed this month between the National Maritime Museum—its owner—and PPARC. Many old instruments held in Cambridge and the RGO's public as-