ing. "You don't want to wait 10 years."

Fultz also takes strong exception to Prince and Andrus's statement that preventing disease in the chimp model is not a relevant criterion for judging vaccines. Says Fultz, "That's one of the stupidest statements I've ever heard." Letvin, too, dismisses the contention. Focusing only on chronic infection might lead researchers to overlook a useful vaccine, he argues. "If we have a vaccine that can make people live decades longer, we need to know that," says Letvin.

The next step in this debate could be a meeting to hash out these issues. Alan Schultz, who oversees AIDS vaccine research at NIAID, says he will do his "public servant best" to organize one. **–JON COHEN**

SCIENTIFIC MISCONDUCT

Baylor Saga Comes To an End

Molecular physiologist Kimon Angelides last week ended a long, costly battle against his former employer, Baylor College of Medicine, which had found him guilty of fabricating data, stripped him of tenure, and evicted him from his lab. On 10 February, Angelides settled a civil suit filed against Baylor and 14 individuals at the university, just hours after a federal appeals board had released a report backing Baylor's findings that Angelides had "committed scientific misconduct." Angelides has agreed to accept the appeals board's decision and will receive no payment, although Baylor will pay his attorneys $500,000.

"We're quite pleased with the result," says Baylor lead trial counsel Gerard G. Pecht of the Houston-based firm Fulbright & Jaworski LLP, who says those sued "have been totally vindicated." The settlement also may bring a measure of relief to officials at other universities, who have worried about being sued simply for following the federal government's requirements to investigate misconduct allegations (*Science*, 12 February, p. 913). "This kind of suit shouldn't have gotten to this point at all, in our view," says Allan Shipp of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

The saga began in 1992, when a Baylor department chief questioned data in Angelides's grant applications for research on the transmission of nerve impulses through sodium channels. After a 2-year investigation, a Baylor panel found that Angelides had falsified and fabricated figures in five journal articles and five grant applications. In 1997, the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) concurred with Baylor's findings and barred Angelides from receiving federal grants for 5 years.

Angelides, who claimed that other scientists in his lab were the ones who had falsified data, appealed the ORI ruling. He also sued Baylor, its president, the seven panelists who examined his case, two former members of his lab, and four others for slander and denial of due process.

A jury had listened to more than a week's worth of plaintiff's testimony when the HHS appeals board released its 171-page report on 10 February. The board, which conducted its own investigation, found that Angelides's "accusations against other researchers were unsubstantiated." The evidence, the board concluded, showed "not honest error, not disputes in interpretation of data, not preliminary results that later proved overly optimistic, not even carelessness, but rather intentional and conscious fraud."

According to Angelides's attorney, James Pianelli of McGehee and Pianelli LLP in Houston, "the timing of the [appeals board report] influenced our decision to settle the litigation." Under the 10 February agreement, Angelides accepts the appeals decision and ORI debarment and will neither appeal nor criticize the decision publicly, will not claim "he has been exonerated or vindicated," and dismisses all claims against the defendants.

The appeals board's validation of Baylor's findings "certainly says that the system is working properly," says Barbara Mishkin, a Washington, D.C.–based attorney who specializes in scientific misconduct. But while Baylor came out ahead, the Angelides case may still discourage universities from pursuing misconduct cases—and scientists from serving on review panels, experts say. "It's not reasonable for people to make this very difficult, painful decision and expose their personal assets to risk," says C. K. Gunsalus, associate vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Illinois.

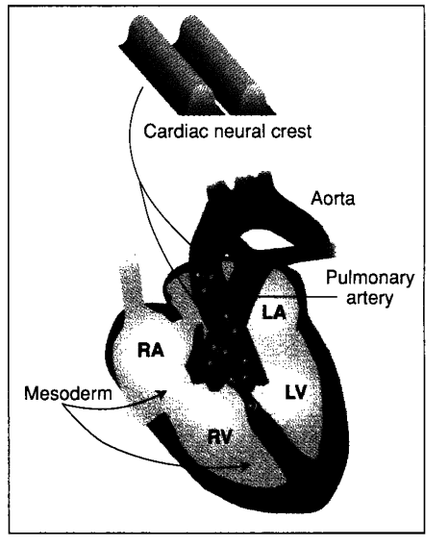
The case may yet leave a positive legacy for researchers. In response to the Angelides affair, the AAMC and ORI have argued that universities and faculty who conduct proper scientific misconduct investigations should be shielded legally from lawsuits. At least, argues Pecht, any civil action should be delayed until the case has been through appeal at HHS. ORI acting director Chris Pascal says HHS "is considering whether additional legal protections are needed in this area," via legislation or regulation. "Otherwise," says Pecht, "the inclination may be for some institutions to sweep the problem under the rug."

–JOCELYN KAISER

HUMAN GENETICS

A Gene That Scrambles Your Heart

Building the perfect heart is hard. Each year about 30,000 babies are born with one of the more than 30 different types of congenital heart defects (CHDs), making these the most common of all human birth defects. Despite much searching, until now the genes behind only three rare disorders had been found. But on page 1158, researchers identify a gene that appears to be key to a widespread form of CHD associated with DiGeorge syndrome, which is second only to Down syndrome in causing malformations of the heart.



The heart of the problem. Parts of the heart's outflow tract and its vessels are derived from neural crest cells (green), which rely on the *Ufd1* gene.

The findings may finally end a frantic hunt for the DiGeorge gene, which when damaged or missing prevents a proper connection between the outflow of the heart and the main blood vessels and also causes malformations in the facial bones and thymus gland. Surprisingly, the gene encodes a component of the cell's protein degradation machinery, support-

SOURCE: SRIVASTAVA *ET AL.*, *NATURE MEDICINE*, 12, 10, P. 1069 (OCTOBER 1996)