

## LOCAL NEWS

## Professors win Nemitsas Prize for 2010

## FIRST AWARD IS GIVEN FOR MEDICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

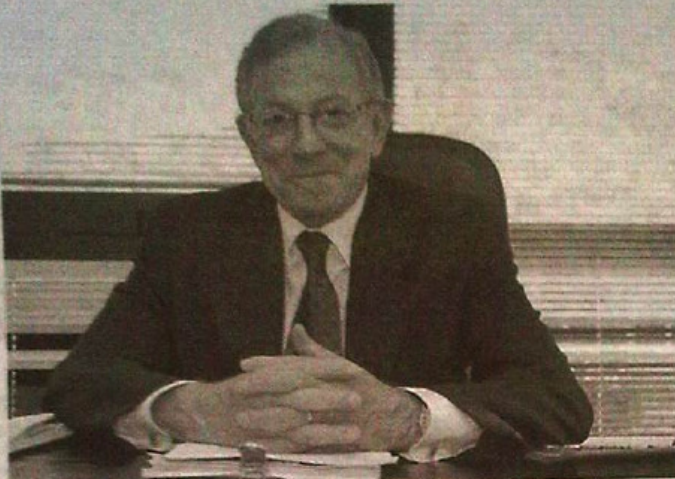
**P**rofessors Eleftherios Diamandis and Kypros Nicolaides are the winners of the first Nemitsas Prize to be awarded by the Takis and Louki Nemitsas Foundation.

The foundation - which chose to make its first award for medicine - said the two winners were selected from a field of 30 applications and nominations by the International Prize Committee following consultation with experts world-wide. The number of applicants and their very high quality made the decision process long and arduous, the foundation added.

In view of the broad spectrum of areas covered by Medical Sciences and the excellence of the candidates, the committee recommended that the prize be split into two areas - excellence in biomedical research and excellence in clinical research.

It unanimously recommended they go to Professor Eleftherios Diamandis for excellence in biomedical research and Professor Kypros Nicolaides for excellence in clinical research.

Presentation of the prize will be made by President Christofias at the special ceremony of



the foundation to be held on November 23 at the Hilton Hotel in Nicosia.

The foundation was set up by leading industrialist Takis Nemitsas and his wife Louki in pursuit of their long-standing dream to contribute to nurturing research and development here.

Nemitsas, who served as Minister of Commerce and Industry in the Vassiliou administration, has a successful track record in industry, having launched early on a pioneering turbine manufacturing firm

that was successful both on the local market and abroad, becoming Cyprus first exporter of machinery.

It was this passion for technical and technological developments, coupled with a desire to give back to Cyprus, that sparked the idea of the foundation.

To fulfil the needs of the foundation that bears their name, Takis and Louki Nemitsas have donated their movable and immovable property.

They have also aimed high, carefully choosing sectors that

are not covered by other local awards.

In so doing, they have combined their interests - the technological achievements of Takis Nemitsas and the music and arts that are the passions of his wife.

The aim is to recognise Cypriot scientists and creators who live and work in Cyprus and abroad, and whose research is linked to inventions or discoveries, or such creations in classical music and the arts that they bring great benefits to Cyprus.

## How the winners were chosen

Medical sciences were singled out for the first award.

The Foundation sent out 2,000 emails to professors at universities in Europe and the US, while members of the foundation's board also sent out a host of emails.

The foundation also has its own web page.

Five judges were carefully picked (their names remained under wraps), one of them a woman, two from the US, two from the UK and one from Greece.

The decision was taken in a teleconference held in London earlier this month.

The foundation aspires to reward research and achievement after university graduation, since many institutions already cover academic excellence at university.

Except from the Nemitsas, the other members of the board are Prof. Antonis Constantinides, Dr Alkis Pierides, Consultant Michalis Sarris, businessman Efsthios Papadakis, Mechanical Engineer Andreas Christou, lawyer Agapios Agapiou, Accountant Costas Kallis and Business Consultant Michalis Polydorides.

Born in Limassol in 1952, **Eleftherios Diamandis** is currently Professor and head of the division of clinical biochemistry and the department of laboratory medicine and pathology at the University of Toronto. He is also head of clinical biochemistry at Mount Sinai Hospital, University Health Network and Toronto Medical Laboratories. Diamandis received a Ph.D. in analytical chemistry in 1979; an M.D. in 1986; and B.Sc. in chemistry in 1976 from the University of Athens, Greece. He was awarded a diploma in clinical biochemistry in 1984 from the University of Toronto, Canada.

A certified clinical chemist by the Canadian Academy of Clinical Biochemistry and the American Board of Clinical Chemistry, Diamandis' team cloned seven new members of the human kallikrein family and delineated the complete genomic organisation of the human kallikrein locus. His laboratory (Advanced Centre for Detection of Cancer)



aims to understand the physiological and pathological roles of kallikreins in cancer and other diseases including neurodegeneration, inflammation and skin disorders, and to examine their utility as biomarkers.

A world expert in ante-natal surgery, **Kypros Nicolaides** was born in 1953 in Paphos. He studied medicine at King's College School of Medicine and Dentistry in London and soon after graduation joined the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in 1980, where he carried out research with Professor Stuart Campbell and Professor Charles Rodeck. The team soon produced some very important papers on the use of foetoscapy in the management of a wide range of conditions and procedures such as blood and tissue sampling in the diagnosis of single gene defects. After the departure of Professor Rodeck, Nicolaides became director of the Harris Birthright Research Centre for Fetal Medicine. The centre was set up in 1984 by Sir Philip Harris and the charity organisation Birthright. It was the first foetal unit in the United Kingdom, and remains the biggest in the world. Kypros began a teaching and research pro-



gramme which attracts 1000 health professionals from all over the world every year. The unit examines 15,000 patients a year.