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MED-EL Congratulates Blake Wilson, Lasker Award Recipient and Pioneer of the Hearing Industry

Innsbruck, Austria – (September 23, 2013) – MED-EL congratulates cochlear implant innovator and long-time collaborator, Professor Blake Wilson, for receipt of the *Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award*.

Wilson's research and development of Continuous Interleaved Sampling (CIS) in the late 1980's as an auditory coding strategy for cochlear implants vastly improved the technology that was in place at the time. CIS enabled dramatic improvements in speech recognition without visual cues, something that up until that point had not been achieved for the majority of patients. Because of Wilson's research, cochlear implant users can now expect to be able to understand conversations over the phone and in relatively quiet areas. CIS is the basis for the coding strategies that have been incorporated into MED-EL's audio processors.

This work paved the way for a new standard for optimal speech understanding, propelling the acceptance and adoption of cochlear implant systems worldwide. The successful experience that many cochlear implant users report can be linked to CIS, a gift that has allowed cochlear implant users to stay connected to family and friends over the phone, and pursue limitless educational and career opportunities.

Dr. Wilson is the Co-Director (along with Debara Tucci, M.D.) of the Duke Hearing Center at the Duke University Medical Center. In addition, he is an adjunct professor in three departments at Duke: Surgery, Biomedical Engineering, and Electrical and Computer Engineering. He also is the first Scholar in Residence for the Pratt School of Engineering at Duke, and is an Honorary Professor at the University of Warwick in the UK. In former times, he was the Director for the Center for Auditory Prosthesis Research and later a Senior Fellow at the Research Triangle Institute in the Research Triangle Park, NC, USA.

In 2007, Wilson was named as the Chief Strategy Advisor for MED-EL Headquarters in Innsbruck, Austria, and in 2011 additionally became the Director of MED-EL's first U.S.-based, onsite basic research laboratory in Durham, NC, USA.

"Understanding the structure of a sound and developing ways to help the brain interpret that sound in meaningful ways has transformed the lives of people around the world," said MED-EL Founder & CEO Ingeborg Hochmair, PhD, who received the 2013 *Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award* together with Blake Wilson and Graeme Clark (emeritus professor of Melbourne University). "We look forward to many more years of collaboration with Blake, being inspired by his findings, and working together on our shared mission to overcome hearing loss as a barrier to communication."

MED-EL's R&D Team and Wilson are collaborating on topics such as the benefit of bilateral implantation, combined electric and acoustic stimulation, and more recently better understanding of cochlear implants for single-sided deafness.

About MED-EL

MED-EL Medical Electronics is a leading provider of hearing implant systems worldwide. The company was founded by Austrian scientists and industry pioneers Ingeborg and Erwin Hochmair, who together developed the world's first microelectronic, multichannel cochlear implant in 1977. In 1990, they laid the foundation for the successful growth of the company when they hired their first employees. To date, the privately held company now has more than 1,500 employees around the world.

The cochlear implant was and remains the first replacement of a human sense, the sense of hearing. Today, MED-EL offers the widest range of implantable solutions worldwide to treat the various degrees of hearing loss, including cochlear, middle ear and bone conduction implant systems as well as a system for combined electric and acoustic stimulation.

MED-EL's mission is to overcome hearing loss as a barrier to communication and quality of life. Individuals in approximately 100 countries enjoy the gift of hearing with a MED-EL Hearing Implant System. www.medel.com

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CONTACT:

Thomas Herrmann
MED-EL Medical Electronics
Fürstenweg 77a
A - 6020 Innsbruck
T: +43 (0) 512 28 88 89-182
press@medel.com