

Dr. Thomas Balkany Receives First Noel L. Cohen Award from the American Neurotology Society

Thomas Balkany, M.D., Hotchkiss professor and chair emeritus of the Department of Otolaryngology at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, is the first recipient of the annual Noel L. Cohen Award from the American Neurotology Society (ANS). Dr. Balkany was recognized during ANS's Annual Meeting on September 11.

"The award recognized Dr. Balkany's career-long contributions to our subspecialty, especially as they relate to all aspects of cochlear implantation and the ethics of treating deaf patients," said Fred F. Telischi, M.D., FACS, chair of otolaryngology, professor of neurological surgery and biomedical engineering, and the James R. Chandler Chair in Otolaryngology at the Miller School of Medicine.



Dr. Thomas
Balkany

The ANS created the Noel L. Cohen Award for Significant Contributions to Otology and Neurotology to honor Dr. Cohen's legacy and life's work. The award's qualifications are no stretch for Dr. Balkany, whose achievements in the field include more than 250 peer-reviewed publications, four books, and 14 patents for cochlear implants.

Dr. Balkany worked with cochlear implant originator Dr. William House and witnessed the cochlear implant's evolution from a homemade apparatus built with copper wire and a Bunsen burner, to today's medically and technologically advanced devices.

Dr. Balkany founded the University of Miami Ear Institute in 1990, with the support of then-Chair W. Jarrard Goodwin, M.D., and Dean Bernard J. Fogel, M.D., to advance clinical care, research, and advanced training in the treatment of deafness and other disorders of the ear. The program has since treated and now follows more than 3,000 cochlear implant patients, many of whom were babies and went on to become debate champions and Silver Knight Award winners, and represent every profession.

Dr. Balkany is also the founder of the Institute for Cochlear Implant Training, which provides advanced training for neurotologists, pediatric otolaryngologists, audiologists, and speech pathologists in the U.S. and a dozen other countries. Other honors include the Hallpike-Nylen Award of the Barany Society (Uppsala, Sweden); the Graham Frasier Award of the Royal Society of Medicine, London; the Fowler Award of the New York League for the Hard of Hearing; and the Health Care Heroes Lifetime Achievement Award from the Greater Miami

Chamber of Commerce. He is a member of the Medical Alumni Association Hall of Fame, Alpha Omega Alpha, and Iron Arrow.

Dr. Balkany knew Dr. Cohen, also a cochlear implantation pioneer, and considered him a close friend. They met at the first cochlear implant conference in 1982.

“I’m very happy to have received this award, but it’s really about honoring him,” Dr. Balkany said. “The main purpose of the award and its main meaning to me is to honor the work of Noel Cohen, a great husband, father, physician and friend.”