University of Nevada School of Medicine trauma surgeon John Fildes, M.D., was named a University of Nevada, Reno Foundation Professor in recognition of his research and teaching achievements.

Fildes has received numerous awards and honors, including the White House Medical Unit Certificate of Appreciation and the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce’s Community Achievement Award, both in 1998. He was also named the 2006 Physician of the Year by the Nevada State Medical Association and earned a Center for Disease Control Certificate of Appreciation in 2009.

“Dr. Fildes is an accomplished surgeon and scientist, but above all else he is an outstanding educator and mentor,” said Thomas Schwenk, dean of the School of Medicine, in his nomination letter. “His performance sets the standard for our entire clinical faculty. His teaching is the reason, in part, that the Department of Surgery has consistently received the award for teaching excellence from graduating medical students.”

Fildes has brought 23 research and training grants to the School of Medicine totaling $13 million, and he was the first clinical faculty member to receive a grant award for more than $1 million, which was quickly followed by a $7.5 million research award to support the development of new technologies to deliver high-speed blood transfusions to the battlefield.

Fildes completed his residency in general surgery at the Bronx-Lebanon Hospital in Bronx, N.Y., followed by a fellowship in trauma, burns and surgical critical care at the Cook County Hospital in Chicago, Ill. He began his academic career at the University of Illinois and Rush University.

With the stipend bestowed by the award, Fildes plans to engage in professional development endeavors centering on leadership.

His name, along with those of all Foundation Professors, is engraved in the granite pillars of the University’s Honor Court at the south end of campus, adjacent to the University’s historic Quadrangle.
School of Medicine mourns longtime faculty member Lupan

The University of Nevada School of Medicine and the University of Nevada, Reno community lost a longtime faculty member this summer when David Lupan, senior associate dean of basic science and research, passed away June 23 following a brief illness.

At Lupan’s memorial service July 1, Thomas Schwenk, dean of the medical school, said that early after his arrival in 2011, he learned to trust Lupan’s wisdom and judgment on a number of complex issues.

“His background knowledge about many complex problems was astonishing,” Schwenk said. “History is an important place to start in understanding the complexities of the medical school, and Dr. Lupan was an authoritative source for both the critical and the mundane aspects of such history.”

Born in Ohio and raised in Arizona, Lupan attended graduate school at the University of Iowa, earning his doctorate in microbiology in 1973.

He joined the University of Nevada School of Medicine as an assistant professor immediately after graduating, and was promoted to professor in 1989, where he earned the reputation as an expert in bacteriology and mycology, and mechanisms of resistance to antimicrobials.

During his early career, he was responsible for several major courses and sequences in microbiology for medical students, and received the Outstanding Teacher of the Year award in 1988 and 1997. During the early phase of his scientific career, he published or presented 49 posters, peer-reviewed manuscripts and abstracts, and was the recipient or co-recipient of 10 externally funded grant awards.

For the past 10 years, Lupan served as senior associate dean for basic science and research at the School of Medicine. Prior to that, he was assistant dean and interim senior associate dean for five years.

A strong supporter of expanded research opportunities for students, Lupan loved lecturing and teaching, and was a mentor to many during his nearly 40 years on the faculty. In his early years of teaching, some of his students would call him “Sarge” because of his exacting expectations in the classroom.

Luci Young, his assistant during his years as senior associate dean, said he was always willing to counsel students on their research projects and guide them in whatever aspect they needed.

“He was helpful to anyone interested in research, and respected researchers and the people who worked for them,” Young said.

She added that he was particularly proud of the annual George Bierkamper Student Research Convocation, held each January.

“It is good experience for students to develop their abstracts and then present them before faculty judges,” Young said.

Lupan’s substantial, thoughtful and detailed contributions to the University and the School of Medicine’s governance and leadership cannot be fully measured. He served on 12 major University committees, 21 major medical school committees, and was a member of, or chaired, 18 additional committees or task forces in his role as senior associate dean.

This service contributed to faculty and chair searches, student admissions, animal care, equipment and lab design, building design and construction, student health, biosafety, information technology, personnel and budget issues, indirect cost distribution, the Office of Sponsored Program Administration, faculty bylaws, student research awards, space allocation and research network administration.

Marsha Read, the University’s vice president for research, described Lupan as a University citizen who helped facilitate interaction between the main campus and the School of Medicine.

“He had a good sense of how to maximize the strengths of people and make them shine,” she said. “He was thoughtful both in the sense of being a good analytical thinker and in terms of the effects actions would have on people.”

Schwenk said Lupan represented the best in academic leadership.

“He will be sorely missed by his colleagues, staff and students, but most of all by his family and friends,” Schwenk said.

Lupan had planned to retire in July, and had just bought a home in Arizona where he and Joyce, his wife of 44 years, planned to spend several months each winter.

Donations may be made to a memorial fund that has been established in Lupan’s name. Gifts may be sent to the University of Nevada, Reno Foundation, David Lupan/School of Medicine Fund, Mail Stop 0530, University of Nevada School of Medicine, Reno, NV 89557-0530.