V. Michael Holers, MD ’78, HS ’85, the Scoville Professor of Rheumatology and professor of medicine and immunology at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, is renowned for his innovative research in rheumatology and ability to translate basic findings into new approaches to disease treatment and prevention.

Holers has studied the genomics, structure, and roles in disease of complement proteins, which are key components of the immune system, and his lab remains one of the two or three major groups in the world investigating this system. In addition, an interest over the last decade has been to understand how the autoimmune disease rheumatoid arthritis is initiated prior to clinical onset; and in that endeavor his research group and collaborators have proposed new paradigms for this process and initiated the first primary prevention trial in this condition. Holers has more than 350 publications and is currently principal investigator of eight federal and other organization grants.

At each step in his career, Holers has asked how his basic research could be translated into new treatments. He cofounded a biotechnology company, Taligen Therapeutics, in 2004, serving part-time as its chief scientific officer until it was sold in 2011.

Holers has also been a tireless volunteer and Board of Directors member for more than 20 years in the American College of Rheumatology, currently serves as president of the International Complement Society, has been an advisor for the Lupus Research Institute, and is on the Advisory Council of the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Throughout this career, Holers has been a committed teacher and mentor. His NIH grant for training fellows and students was recently renewed for the fourth time.

Holers’ many honors include an Inventor of the Year Award and a Technology Transfer Lifetime Pinnacle Award, both from the University of Colorado. He received a Distinguished Basic Investigator Award from the American College of Rheumatology and has been elected to both the American Society for Clinical Investigation and the Association of American Physicians.

Holers obtained his bachelor’s degree from Purdue University in 1973 and his medical degree from Washington University in 1978. After an internship and residency at Washington University, he was a clinical fellow in rheumatology at the University of Colorado. He moved back to Washington University in 1983 as a rheumatology research fellow and joined the faculty in 1986. He has served on the University of Colorado faculty since 1993.

The Washington University Medical Center Alumni Association is pleased to present its Alumni Achievement Award to Dr. Holers.