

**Dr. Stuart Foster Wins Ernest C. Manning Awards Foundation's
"Award of Distinction" for Development and Commercialization of
Preclinical Micro-Ultrasound**

Calgary, Alberta – September 29, 2006 – In recognition of his innovative concept of micro-ultrasound and its contribution to field of preclinical micro-imaging, Dr. Stuart Foster has won the 2006 Ernest C. Manning Awards Foundation's "Award of Distinction". The award, which includes a \$25,000 prize, will be presented to Dr. Foster at the annual gala awards dinner today in Calgary, AB.

"Dr. Foster's unique and innovative work in the area of high-frequency micro-ultrasound, first created within the academic environment of Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and then commercialized successfully by VisualSonics, exemplifies the type of Canadian innovation that the Manning Innovation Awards recognize", says Bruce Fenwick, Executive Director of the Ernest C. Manning Awards Foundation. "We are proud to announce and celebrate Dr. Foster as the recipient of our 2006 Award of Distinction." The Foundation was created in 1980 to promote and support Canadian innovation. Since 1982, the foundation has presented over \$3.6 million in prize money through its annual awards program with \$165,000 being awarded this year.

"I must recognize the critical contributions of the many students and research engineers who made the new technology possible", says Dr. Stuart Foster, senior scientist at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and Professor and Associate Chairman, Department of Medical Biophysics, University of Toronto. "I am equally indebted to the talented team at VisualSonics that has commercialized this technology and helped to make it a key platform in the global research and pharmaceutical marketplace". Dr. Foster is also Founder, Chairman and Chief Scientific Officer of VisualSonics.

"It takes great drive and commitment to propel discovery through to translation and have such a substantial, internationally felt impact. More than that, it takes great vision and leadership, qualities Stuart exemplifies," says Dr. Michael Julius, Vice-President, Research, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. "His scholarship and pre-eminence in the field of ultrasound imaging is recognized worldwide."

"What started as a very innovative concept by Dr. Foster a number of years ago is now the basis for VisualSonics' technology platform which is being used by 300 plus institutions worldwide," said VisualSonics President and CEO Tom Little. "Stuart's ongoing scientific contribution to VisualSonics and to the scientific community at large is significant and we are thrilled that he is being recognized with a Manning Innovation Award of Distinction for his efforts."

The Ernest C. Manning Awards Foundation

The Foundation was established in 1980 in the name of prominent Alberta statesman, Ernest C. Manning, to promote and support Canadian innovation. (www.manningawards.ca). This year, four awards totaling \$145,000 will go to leading Canadian innovators. Another \$20,000 will go to Young Canadian Innovators with winning projects at the 2006 Canada-Wide Science Fair.

About VisualSonics

VisualSonics is the world's leading developer of high-resolution, ultrasound-based, *in vivo* micro-imaging systems designed specifically for non-invasive preclinical research. The company's enabling micro-ultrasound technology, the Vevo 770, allows researchers at the world's most prestigious pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, hospitals and research centers to conduct genetic research, phenotypic study and drug development.

Micro-ultrasound is the fastest growing preclinical imaging modality. This enabling technology is facilitating research in cardiac and vascular disease, cancer, stem cell research and developmental biology. When compared to other imaging options, only micro-ultrasound has the combination of high-resolution, real-time imaging, *in vivo* detection and analysis, reasonable cost, ease-of-use, portability and no negative biological effects. More information on VisualSonics and micro-ultrasound can be found at www.visualsonics.com.

About Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre:

Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre is transforming health care through the dedication of its more than 10,000 staff members who provide compassionate and innovative patient focused care. An internationally recognized leader in women's health, academic research and education and an affiliation with the University of Toronto distinguishes Sunnybrook as one of Canada's premier health sciences centres. Sunnybrook specializes in caring for newborns, adults and the elderly, treating and preventing cancer, neurological and psychiatric conditions, heart problems, orthopaedic and arthritic conditions and traumatic injuries.

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Press Release: Dr. Stuart Foster Wins Manning "Award of Distinction" for Development of Micro-Ultrasound