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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Lions Clubs International Honors Dr. Lee Gil Ya With Humanitarian Award**

(Oak Brook, Ill., June 29, 2020) - Award-winning philanthropist, Dr. Lee Gil Ya, was further honored by Lions Clubs International by receiving the coveted Lions Clubs International Humanitarian Award. During a ceremony in Seoul, Korea on June 29, 2020 Dr. Lee Gil Ya humbly accepted the Humanitarian Award for her lifelong dedication to medical practice, education, social justice and humanitarian service throughout her country of South Korea.

Upon graduating from medical school and starting her own obstetrics and gynecology practice, Dr. Lee Gil Ya noticed that countless people needed medical care but were not receiving proper treatment due to high costs. She began admitting patients who could not afford to pay the deposit that other clinics demanded and offered free uterine cancer examinations to women. To keep her promise to support women's healthcare, she still provides free uterine cancer examinations and so far, more than 130,000 women have received such care.

"Every life is a valuable life, and everyone has a right to life," said Dr. Lee Gil Ya. "Medical services should not be limited to those who can afford it, so I have made it my mission and vision to provide everyone the opportunity to live a healthy life."

In 1958, she founded Gachon University Gil Hospital in Incheon which has developed into one of the largest hospitals in Korea with more than 1,500 hospital beds. Dr. Lee Gil Ya has expanded her humanitarian work worldwide. She founded the Hansen International Association of Supporters in 1993 and helped patients with Hansen's Disease in Vietnam. She also opened a vocational school in Vietnam to support families of Vietnam veterans. Her work in Vietnam led to her work helping heart disease patients, and for over 30 years, she has provided free heart surgeries to 432 children from 17 developing countries, including Mongolia, the Philippines, and Kazakhstan. She also serves as chairperson for the Gachon Gil Foundation.

Dr. Lee Gil Ya is recognized by Lions Clubs International for promoting cultural development, advocating for women's rights to education and healthcare, and providing scholarships to students seeking careers in medicine. She received numerous awards including Orders of Merit and Medals of Honor, which are given by the president of South Korea to people who "rendered distinguished services" to the country.

"I strongly believe that we should strive to make a continuous effort for not only ourselves but also others in need," said Dr. Lee Gil Ya. "Volunteerism should be based on pure motivation to put others first. Respect for the family, neighborhood, and human lives is a fundamental foundation of my practice of medicine. Regardless of region, religion, or race, medical professionals should reach out with love and the spirit of volunteerism."

Lions International President Dr. Jung-Yul Choi presented the award to Dr. Lee Gil Ya. “I am honored to present this award on behalf of the more than 1.4 million Lions around the world,” he said. “Your work is changing lives, just like Lions, and we are proud to support you and your important humanitarian efforts.”

The Lions Clubs International Humanitarian Award comes with a US\$250,000 prize from Lions Clubs International Foundation. She joins a distinguished list of prior recipients, including Mother Teresa, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Dr. Denis Mukwege. Learn more about the Lions’ Humanitarian Award and see our list winners at <https://www.lionsclubs.org/humanitarian-winners>.

### **About Lions Clubs International**

Lions Clubs International is the largest service club organization in the world. More than 1.4 million members in over 48,000 clubs are serving in 200 countries and geographic areas around the globe. Since 1917, Lions have strengthened local communities through hands-on service and humanitarian projects and can extend our service impact through the generous support of our Lions Clubs International Foundation. We are focused on supporting vision, youth, diabetes, the environment, childhood cancer, hunger, humanitarian and disaster relief, to help address some of the biggest challenges facing humanity. For more information about Lions Clubs International, visit [lionsclubs.org](https://www.lionsclubs.org).