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François M Abboud MD joined the faculty of the University of Iowa in 1960 and was appointed Director of the Division of Cardiovascular Diseases in 1970. From 1974 to 2012, he was the Founding and sole Director of the University of Iowa Cardiovascular Research Center. Under his leadership, the Center gained international prominence by fostering several major interdisciplinary research programs and an Institutional Research Training Grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) which has graduated hundreds of cardiovascular physicians and basic scientists since 1974. To honor his legacy of over 5 decades in perpetuity, the Board of Regents of the University of Iowa approved the naming of the Center: The François M. Abboud Cardiovascular Research Center.

From 1976 to January 2002, he was Head of the Department of Internal Medicine and was awarded the Robert H. Williams Distinguished Chairman of Medicine Award by the Association of Professors of Medicine. During his chairmanship, the Department became among the most outstanding research-oriented Departments of Medicine.

Since 1971, Abboud has been the principal investigator of an NIH-funded Program Project Grant (PPG), currently entitled, “Integrative Neurobiology of Cardiovascular Regulation”. The most recent 5-year renewal of this PPG began in July 2014. At the end of this award period in 2019 this PPG would most likely be the longest (48 years) funded research program under the same principal investigator in the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute. He has gained international recognition for his work on the effect of the brain on the cardiovascular system. His studies have focused on the neural control of the heart and circulation with aging, hypertension, heart failure and sleep apnea. He has elucidated the role of endothelial factors and ion channels in activating baroreceptor neurons. He discovered evolutionary conserved mechanosensitive molecules, which contribute to mechanoelectrical transduction of these neurons, and acid sensitive channels which contribute to chemoreceptor sensitivity. His current discovery of a proinflammatory modulation of the innate immune system by the autonomic neurotransmitters in genetic hypertension has enormous potential for further progress in the battle against cardiovascular disease.

His work has been recognized with numerous awards: the ASPET Award for Experimental Therapeutics from the American Society of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, and the Dickinson W. Richards Memorial Award (Pulmonary Diseases), the George E. Brown Memorial Award (Circulation), and the Award of Merit, all of the American Heart Association (AHA). He received the Wiggers Award and Medal of the American Physiological Society, Cardiovascular Section, in 1988; the CIBA Award and Medal for Hypertension Research of the Council of High Blood Pressure Research of the AHA in 1990; the Merck Sharp and Dohme International Award for Research in Hypertension in 1994; and the Gold Heart Award (1995) and the Research Achievement Award (1999) of the American Heart Association. He was the Carl Ludwig Distinguished Lecturer of the American Physiological Society and recipient of the American College of Physicians/ American Society of Internal Medicine Award for Outstanding Work in Science as Related to Medicine in the year 2000. In 2004, he received the Distinguished Scientist Award of the American College of Cardiology. In 2006, he received the Distinguished Research Award from the Association of American Medical Colleges, and in 2007 the Distinguished Scientist Award of the AHA. He was selected for the prestigious Cannon Lecture and Award of the American Physiologic Society, received the Kober Medal of the Association of American Physicians in 2009 and the Ben Qurrah Award from the Arab American Medical Association, Houston Chapter, 2010. The International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences elected to present him with a Medal of Merit for 2015. He was selected as Fellow in the American Physiological Association Inaugural Class of APS Fellows (FAPS). And most recently Dr. Abboud was elected as Fellow of the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences.

Abboud is a member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation and has served as President of the Association of American Physicians, the American Heart Association, the Central Society for Clinical Research, the American Federation for Clinical Research, and the American Clinical and Climatological Association. He was Editor-in-Chief of Circulation Research from 1981 to 1986 and Co-Editor of the Handbook of Physiology: Peripheral Circulation and Organ Blood Flow of the American Physiological Society in 1983. He chaired the Heart and Lung Program Project Research Review Committee of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the NIH from 1978-1980 and was a member of the Advisory Council of the NHLBI. He was elected to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences in 1988 and received a Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) from the University of Lyon, France in 1991. In 1992, he became a Master of the American College of Physicians and was presented with an honorary Doctor of Science degree from The Medical College of Wisconsin in 1994. He served as the first Editor-in-Chief of the Proceedings of the Association of American Physicians. In 1997, he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and to its Midwest Regional Council in 2003.

Dr. Bohuslav Ostadal, President of the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences, was pleased to announce the election of an individual for the Medal of Merit award for 2015. This award, the highest honour of the Academy, was bestowed upon Dr. François M. Abboud for his outstanding achievements in cardiovascular education and research. The Medal will be presented to Dr. Abboud by Dr. Roberto Bolli, IACS President-Elect during the American Heart Association Scientific Sessions in Orlando FL in November 2015.

Previous winners of this prestigious Medal of Merit award:

2015 IACS Award Presentations

The Academy has bestowed 31 awards and honours to highly accomplished individuals during 2015. These recognitions were made in view of their achievements in cardiovascular sciences as well as commitments for promoting heart health all over the world. The members of the Awards Committee consisted of Drs. Roberto Bolli, Grant Pierce, Otoni Gomes, Andras Varro, Suresh K. Gupta, Naoki Makino, Karl Werdan, Dennis B. McNamara, Jan Slezak and Naranjan S. Dhalla (Chair). The awards, honours and recognitions are listed below.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD IN CARDIOVASCULAR SCIENCE, MEDICINE AND SURGERY

1. Dr. Edwin E. Daniel, Victoria, Canada
2. Dr. Dragana Djuric, Belgrade, Serbia
3. Dr. Irving Zucker, Omaha, USA
4. Dr. Ashok Kr. Chauhan, Noida, India
5. Dr. Frantisek Kolbel, Prague, Czech Republic
6. Dr. Horacio Cingolani, La Plata, Argentina
7. Dr. Mohammad A.Q. Siddiqui, New York, USA
8. Dr. M. Sankaran V. Valiathan, Manipal, India
9. Dr. Noboru Yamazaki, Hamamatsu, Japan

DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP AWARD IN CARDIOVASCULAR SCIENCES

1. Dr. Shyam S. Agrawal, Noida, India
2. Dr. Chandrasekharan C. Kartha, Trivandrum, India
3. Dr. Miroslav Barancik, Bratislava, Slovak Republic
4. Dr. Devendra K. Agrawal, Omaha, USA
5. Dr. Vladimir Jakovljevic, Belgrade, Serbia
6. Dr. Melchior Luiz Lima, Vitoria, Brazil
7. Dr. Enrique Castaneda Saldana, Lima, Peru

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD IN CARDIOVASCULAR SCIENCE, MEDICINE AND SURGERY

1. Dr. Surya Ramachandran, Thiruvananthapuram, India
2. Dr. George Jackowski, Woodbridge, Canada
3. Dr. Elias Kallas, Pouso Alegre, Brazil

NAMED AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN CARDIOVASCULAR SCIENCES

Makoto Nagano Award for Distinguished Achievements in Cardiovascular Education
Dr. Suresh K. Gupta, New Delhi, India

Naranjan Dhalla Award for Innovative Investigators in Cardiovascular Sciences
Dr. Jan Slezak, Bratislava, Slovak Republic

Howard Morgan Award for Distinguished Achievements in Cardiovascular Research
Dr. Bruce McManus, Vancouver, Canada

Norman Alpert Award for Established Investigators in Cardiovascular Sciences
Dr. Aruni Bhatnagar, Louisville, USA

Bohuslav Ostadal Award for Excellence in Cardiovascular Sciences
Dr. Devendra Agrawal, Omaha, USA

Jan Slezak Award for Excellence in Cardiovascular Sciences
Dr. Tanya Ravingerova, Bratislava, Slovakia

Otoni Gomes Award for Excellence in Cardiovascular Sciences
Dr. Veronica D’Annunzio, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Ricardo Gelpi Award for Excellence in Cardiovascular Sciences
Dr. Antoinette Oliveira Blackman, Brasilia, Brazil

Suresh Gupta Award for Excellence in Cardiovascular Sciences
Dr. Morris Karmazyn, London, Canada
Dr. Dinender K. Singla, Orlando, USA

Ramesh Goyal Award for Excellence in Cardiovascular Sciences
Dr. Ghassan Bkaily, Sherbrooke, Canada

Harpal Butter Award for Excellence in Cardiovascular Sciences
Dr. Devendra Agrawal, Omaha, USA
The Congress Center of the Slovak Academy of Science in Smolenice, Slovakia, hosted the International Symposium organized by the Institute for Heart Research, Slovak Academy of Sciences in collaboration with the Slovak Society of Cardiology, Slovak Physiological Society, and the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences in Winnipeg, Canada. The meeting was held under the patronage of the Prime minister of Slovakia and under the auspices of the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences, International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences – European Section, European Academy of Sciences and Arts and was dedicated to the 75th Birthday of Prof. Jan Slezak as a tribute to his lifetime scientific achievements.

The venue of the meeting, Smolenice Castle, located in the village of Smolenice on the slopes of the Small Carpathian Mountains, provided a unique opportunity to get together basic scientists and clinicians working in the field of cardiovascular research and created an exciting, enjoyable and friendly atmosphere for an exchange of new ideas and stimulating discussions.

During the Opening ceremony, welcome greetings were presented by Dr. Miroslav Barancik, Director of the Institute for Heart Research Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava; Dr. Bohuslav Ostadal, President of the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences; Dr. Andras Varro, President of the European Section of the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences; Dr. Naranjan S. Dhall, Distinguished Professor of Physiology, University of Manitoba, and Director of Cardiovascular Developments, St-Boniface Hospital Research Centre; Dr. Pawan K. Singal representing the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences, and by Dr. Grant Pierce representing St-Boniface Hospital Research Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Awards of IACS were bestowed on Dr. Miroslav Barancik (Bratislava, Slovakia) who received “Distinguished Leadership Award” and on Dr. Jan Sleza (Bratislava, Slovakia) who was honored with the “Naranjan Dhall Award”.

The total number of participants was over 100, with the scientific program covering different aspects of cardiovascular research consisting of 43 oral communications and 31 poster presentations.

Scientific sessions were devoted to Novel strategies to combat cardiovascular diseases, Excitation-contraction coupling in the heart under physiological interventions, Contractile function of the heart and its restoration, Constitutive and inducible forms of cardioprotection, Novel drug therapy and new approaches to management of cardiovascular diseases, Vessels and their contribution to cardiovascular diseases, Non-cardiac pathologies leading to heart damage and dysfunction.

Two young scientists, participants of Young Investigators competition received Jan Sleza Oral Presentation Awards: Dr. Adrian Szobi (Bratislava, Slovakia) and Dr. V.L. Mascetti (Cambridge, UK).

The moderated Poster Sessions with poster competition were one of the highlights of the meeting. Six young scientists received well-deserved Pavel Bravnen Poster Awards: Drs. Jakub Križak, Csilla Viczenczova, Tamara Benova and Magdalena Jasova from Bratislava, Slovakia, Adrian Sturza from Timisoara (Romania) and C. Norris (Bristol, UK). More than 120 participants, top representatives of the scientific institutions and universities from the whole Slovakia including the top representatives of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and the members of its Presidium, joined the special session of the Symposium on September 4th and took part in the special afternoon session dedicated to Dr. Jan Sleza’s jubilee. The ceremony started with a special event, the initiative of Dr. Sleza – planting of the linden trees main alley leading to the Castle, to commemorate the 10th jubilee of conferences “Advances in Cardiovascular Research” organized by the Institute for Heart Research in Smolenice. Twelve new trees were planted, each one by a pair of renowned scientists.
This session continued not only by special lectures given by Jan’s colleagues and friends from Slovakia and abroad, but Dr. Jan Slezak was honored with the distinction from the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences, Winnipeg, Canada conferred by Dr. Grant Pierce, Dr. Naranjan S. Dhalla, Dr. Pawan K. Singal and Dr. Mike Czubryt. This was followed by special memorable lectures given by Dr. Slezak’s colleagues from the Institute for Heart Research who spoke about the different important periods of Dr. Slezak’s scientific life. One of the most impressive presentations, rich with personal remembrances, was given by the former President of SAS, Dr. Stefan Luby, a close friend of Jan Slezak.

Later on, the participants enjoyed a beautiful Garden Party in the courtyard of the Castle, part of which was tasting Slovakian wines, and performance of country style music band.

The organizers thank all the participants for their active participation and valuable contributions to the high quality of scientific program of the meeting.

The whole scientific program of the meeting as well as the photographs could be viewed on the website of European Section of ISCS: IACS-ES.

www.iacs.sav.sk/iacs.html

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The International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences is grateful to Mitsubishi Rayon Cleansui Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan and Pivotal Therapeutics Inc., Woodbridge, Ontario for the educational grants for IACS Awards Programs as well as some scientific symposia sessions held at different IACS sectional meetings.
Creighton University and the University of Nebraska Medical Center, in association with the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences-North American Section, hosted the 3rd Annual Forum to Promote Young Investigators & Centers of Excellence in Cardiovascular Research in Omaha, Nebraska, USA from September 10-12 of this year. The conference was attended by young investigators, their mentors, and distinguished speakers and guests of honor not only from the United States and Canada, but also from nations as far ranging as Brazil, India, Japan, Turkey, and Hungary.

The meeting kicked off on the evening of Thursday, September 10th in the auditorium of the Mike and Josie Harper Center at Creighton University with a blessing by Father Jim Clifton, Associate Vice Provost of Health Sciences Mission & Identity at Creighton University. Welcome messages were delivered by IACS North American Section President Dr. Grant Pierce, local organizing committee co-Chair Dr. Irving H. Zucker, and Creighton University Provost Dr. Edward O’Connor before Dr. Naranjan S. Dhalla took the podium to deliver his keynote address on “The molecular basis for beneficial effects of CO2-water bath therapy in peripheral artery disease.” Following this stimulating talk, the delegation was invited upstairs for the welcome reception dinner in the Ahmanson Ballroom, where a group of young performers under the guidance of Ms. Keerthi Ranjith entertained guests with a cultural program consisting of song and dance from India.

Day two of the meeting began with four simultaneous sessions that included topics on Cerebrovascular Disease and Stroke, Inflammation & Cytokines, Cardiac & Vascular Regeneration, and The Grant Pierce Young Investigator Competition in Cardiovascular Sciences. The young investigator session featured outstanding talks by five investigators-in-training: Izuagie A. Ikhapoh, Anastasia Familtseva, Bryan K. Becker, Wafa Lefnaier, and Sudhakar Veeranki. A panel of esteemed judges led by Chairs Dr. Morris Karamayzi and Dr. Susan Howlett determined after deliberation that the most outstanding talk was given by Izuagie A. Ikhapoh of Creighton University whose topic was titled “Divergent effects of pro-inflammatory cytokines on VEGF-A-induced differentiation of mesenchymal stem cells into endothelial cells.”

The morning continued with a second round of four sessions featuring topics on diabetic heart failure, neuromodulation in cardiovascular disease, and a non-competition session covering a range of topics presented by young investigators sponsored by the IACS and local planning committee to attend the meeting free of cost. During these sessions, Dr. Jeffrey Ardell of UCLA spoke on “Autonomic regulation therapy in heart failure,” Dr. Aruni Bhatnagar delivered a talk entitled “Role of carboxykinase in myocardial ischemia-reperfusion injury,” and Dr. Jawahar L. Mehta lectured on how MI alters renal function and morphology. Seventeen talks in all were given during the second round of morning sessions.

After lunch, sessions resumed with four afternoon sessions that included the Eric Olson Young Faculty Competition in Biomedical Sciences. The session was co-Chaired by Drs. CC Kartha and Sampath Parthasarathy and featured exceptional presentations by Neenu M. Sharma, Yumei Feng, Lie Gao, and Saraswathi Viswanathan. Speaking “Upregulation of angiotensinogen (AGT) in the paraventricular nucleus (PVN) of the hypothalamus during chronic heart failure (CHF): Role of miR-133a,” Dr. Sharma was deemed to have given the most exceptional presentation and awarded the $1,000 cash prize and plaque. Other afternoon sessions covered the following topics: Exercise Training in Cardiovascular Disease, Epigenetics in Cardiovascular Disease, and Highlighting Sex Differences in Cardiovascular Diseases. Invited lecturers included Drs. Steven L. Britton, Bohuslav Ostadal, Mahesh Gupta, and Carin Wittnich.
Harper Center activities on day two closed out with the Combined Poster Session in the Ballroom Atrium. Approximately sixty posters were presented by investigators at all levels—from young investigators to distinguished faculty—in a packed atrium full of lively discussion, exceptional posters, and spirited socialization. Each poster was judged twice by a panel of judges that included Dr. Suresh Tyagi of University of Louisville and Dr. Kathryn Sandberg of Georgetown University, to name just a few of the twelve distinguished members. From the presentations, eight poster award winners (who each received certificates and $500 cash award) were determined: four in the name of Margaret Moffat for Biomedical Sciences and four in the name of Morris Karmazyn for Translational Medicine. The Moffat Award winners were Shahid Baba, Norbert Nagy, Taha Rehmani, and Swastika Sur. The Karmazyn Award winners were Taylor A. Johnson, Sami Almalki, Yovani Llamas, and Shyam Sundar Nandi.

While general delegates were dismissed for the day following the Poster Session, all guests of honor, distinguished lecturers, faculty and their spouses were invited to a dinner celebration to honor Dr. Edwin Daniel on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday. The esteemed Dr. Daniel served as mentor to many conference delegates, including local organizing committee co-Chair Dr. Devendra K. Agrawal, who hosted the event at Omaha’s historic Durham Museum—a local museum that preserves Omaha’s rich history and the importance of the Union Pacific Railroad in the development of the city and region. Guests at the event dined “trackside” (in view of retired railroad cars and various museum exhibits) and listened to Drs. Agrawal and Dhalla speak about their friend and mentor before Dr. Daniel himself took the podium to speak about his life and career journey. Guests were then treated to Indian cuisine and were afforded the opportunity to explore the various museum exhibits.
The third and final day of the conference began with four simultaneous sessions bright and early in the morning, covering topics like Diabetic Heart Failure with Preserved Ejection Fraction and New Concepts in Arrhythmogenesis. The Kern Wildenthal Young Faculty Competition was held and featured presentations by Surya Ramachandran, Sanjiv Dhingra, Xianwei Wang, and Noah J. Marcus. The presentation by Noah Marcus was determined by a panel of judges led by Drs. Otoni M. Gomes and William G. Mayhan to be the most outstanding in the session, and he was awarded the plaque and $1,000 cash prize for talk “Exercise training attenuates chemoreflex-mediated reductions of renal blood flow in heart failure.”

The second round of morning sessions featured topics on Novel Therapies Targeting Cardiac Metabolism and a session on novel devices for the treatment of heart failure, including talks by Dr. Kalyanam Shivkumar of UCLA and Dr. Michael Kutryk of St. Michael’s Hospital. A final young investigator competition—The James Willerson Young Investigator Competition in Cardiovascular Research—featured oral presentations by Monica Santisteban, Jeffery C. Powers, Brian J. Hansen, Vikrant Rai and Rui Wang. A judging panel chaired by Drs. Pierre B. Fayad and András Varró awarded Monica Santisteban with the plaque and cash prize for her talk entitled “Role of bone marrow and neuroinflammation in hypertension.”

After lunch, the delegates convened to attend the final four sessions, which included topics on instability of atherosclerotic plaque—featuring talks by Drs. Pedro D’Orléans-Juste and Michael Del Core—and the role of nutrition in cardiovascular disease prevention, to which Drs. Mei Zhen Cui and Nisar A. Shaikh, among others, contributed engaging lectures. Following the completion of these final sessions, buses arrived to shuttle delegates to Omaha’s historic Joslyn Art Museum for the presentation of the IACS Awards and the closing sessions, which included topics on instability of atherosclerotic plaque—featuring talks by Drs. Pedro D’Orléans-Juste and Michael Del Core—and the role of nutrition in cardiovascular disease prevention, to which Drs. Mei Zhen Cui and Nisar A. Shaikh, among others, contributed engaging lectures. Following the completion of these final sessions, buses arrived to shuttle delegates to Omaha’s historic Joslyn Art Museum for the presentation of the IACS Awards and the closing banquet dinner.

The Joslyn Art Museum provided the perfect setting for the close of the meeting. After a cocktail hour, delegates streamed into the auditorium for an welcome message from Father Daniel Hendrickson, Creighton University President, and the presentation of the awards to all outstanding contributors to the meeting. Dr. Edwin Daniel as well as to Dr. Irving H. Zucker, the Theodore F. Hubbard Professor of Cardiovascular Research and Chair of the Department of Cellular and Integrative Physiology at University of Nebraska Medical Center. Additionally, Dr. Zucker’s contributions as co-Chair of the Omaha meeting were invaluable.

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Following the recognition of young investigators, the IACS began to honor mentors and leaders who have paved the way for the next generation of researchers to thrive in their chosen fields. The IACS Lifetime Achievement Awards were given both to the aforementioned Dr. Edwin Daniel as well as to Dr. Irving H. Zucker, the Theodore F. Hubbard Professor of Cardiovascular Research and Chair of the Department of Cellular and Integrative Physiology at University of Nebraska Medical Center. Additionally, Dr. Zucker’s contributions as co-Chair of the Omaha meeting were invaluable.

The Institute for Heart + Lung Health, Vancouver BC co-director Dr. Bruce McManus was presented with the Howard Morgan Award for Distinguished Achievements in Cardiovascular Research, and Professor Aruni Bhatnagar of University of Louisville was given the 2015 Norman Alpert Award for Established Investigators in Cardiovascular Science. Dr. George Jackowski, who was unable to attend, was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award. Finally, the IACS Distinguished Leadership Award was given to Dr. Devendra K. Agrawal, Director of the Center for Clinical & Translational Science at Creighton University and co-Chair of this year’s meeting in Omaha. Dr. Agrawal was humbled to receive the award and closed out the ceremony by extending his sincerest gratitude to all those who helped make the meeting a successful and enriching one. Following this, a cultural program and plated dinner served in the shadow of Seattle artist Dale Chiluly’s “Inside & Out” closed out the meeting.

In the weeks following the meeting, we have been flooded with emails and phone calls from delegates thanking us for hosting such an informative and rewarding event. In turn, we wish to thank all speakers, chairs, judges, guests of honor, sponsors, young investigators, and general delegates for their kind words and support of this meeting. On behalf of Creighton University and the University of Nebraska Medical Center, we also wish to thank the IACS North American section for its contributions to research and allowing us to bring such an outstanding meeting to our city. We anxiously await next year’s meeting in Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada.
ERIC OLSON YOUNG FACULTY AWARD IN CARDIOVASCULAR SCIENCES

NEERU M. SHARMA
University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

From left to right: Gary Lopaschuk, András Varró, Neeru M. Sharma (award winner), and Grant Pierce.

KERN WILDENTHAL YOUNG FACULTY AWARD IN CARDIOVASCULAR MEDICINE

NOAH J. MARCUS
Des Moines University, Des Moines, Iowa, USA

From left to right: Gary Lopaschuk, András Varró, Noah J. Marcus (award winner), and Grant Pierce.

MARGARET P. MOFFAT AWARD FOR BEST POSTER IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

SHAHID BABA
University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky, USA

NORBERT NAGY
University of Szeged, Szeged, Hungary

TAHA REHMANI
University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

SWASTIKA SUR
Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

From left to right: Irving H. Zucker, Otoni M. Gomes, Shahid Baba (award winner), Norbert Nagy (award winner), Taha Rehmani (award winner), Swastika Sur (award winner), and Devendra K. Agrawal.

MORRIS KARMAZYN AWARD FOR BEST POSTER IN TRANSLATIONAL MEDICINE

SAMII ALMALKI
Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

TAYLOR A. JOHNSON
University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida, USA

YOVANI LLAMAS
Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

SHYAM SUNDAR NANDI
University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

From left to right: Morris Karmazyn, Otoni M. Gomes, Irving H. Zucker, Taylor A. Johnson (award winner), Sami Almalki (award winner), Yovani Llamas (award winner), Shyam Sundar Nandi (award winner), and Devendra K. Agrawal.
The beautiful city of Belgrade (Republic of Serbia) was hosting the 2nd European Section Meeting of the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences (IACS), which was held in period October 8th-10th, 2015 (Hotel Crowne Plaza). The 2nd European Meeting was organized by the European Section of the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences and the Serbian Association for Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology Research, but it was endorsed by the Serbian Physiological Society, Faculty of Medicine University of Belgrade, Faculty of Medical Sciences University of Kragujevac, and the Hypertension, Infarction, Stroke and Prevention Association of Serbia. In addition, this meeting was sponsored by the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences (Headquarter, Winnipeg, Canada), Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Serbian Medicines and Medical Devices Agency, and companies: Actavis (Belgrade, Serbia), Teva (Belgrade, Serbia), Mitsubishi Rayon Cleansui Co. Ltd. (Tokyo, Japan), and Pivotal Therapeutics (Woodbridge, Ontario, Canada). The meeting was announced at the web sites of the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences, European Section of the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences, and the Serbian Physiological Society. 2nd European Section Meeting of the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences with general topic entitled “Heart Diseases: How New Research May Lead to New Treatments” was accredited for continuing medical education program by the Health Council of Serbia as a first class rank meeting with a maximal number of credits for invited speakers, oral presenters, poster presenters, and participants - physicians and pharmacists. In addition, three day - course for health practitioners with final single choice quiz was accredited also (topics: new drugs and technologies, clinical practice guidelines, and life style management in cardiovascular diseases).

Co-chairs of the Program and Organization Committee were Dragan M. Djuric, Institute of Medical Physiology “Richard Burian”, Faculty of Medicine University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia, and Vladimir LJ. Jakovljevic, Department of Physiology, Faculty of Medical Sciences University of Kragujevac, Kragujevac, Serbia. Honorary co-chairs were Naranjan S. Dhalla, Executive Director IACS, Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences, St. Boniface Hospital Research Centre, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada, and Andras Varro, President European Section IACS, Department of Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapy, Faculty of Medicine University of Szeged, Szeged, Hungary.

The meeting had research- and clinically-based sessions directed by the program committee, special sessions on continuing medical education and public awareness, and most importantly, keynote lectures which enlightened us on recent cardiovascular developments and innovations. The scientific program included a broad mix of topics from molecular, cellular and integrative aspects of cardiovascular sciences, and it was going ahead to the scientific problems covered by the international scientific community. The meeting included the following sessions: opening of the meeting and welcome messages, advances in cardiac dysfunction and heart failure research, advances in arrhythmia...
research, advances in neurocardiovascular research, advances in cardiovascular biology and cardiovascular genomics, novel approaches in cardiovascular therapy, advances in cardiovascular surgery and cardiovascular monitoring: when basic meets clinical research, advances in cardiovascular risk management, prevention and rehabilitation, and IACS awards session with concluding remarks. During this event, it was held a official meeting of the IACS - European Section Council.

A collection of abstracts presented at the meeting was published in English, cataloged at the Serbian National Library, and edited by Dragan M. Djuric and Vladimir Lj. Jakovljevic. The Abstract book (with final program) was included 105 abstracts with authors (and participants as well) from 21 countries (Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Czech Republic, Cuba, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Turkey, USA, and Serbia). Out of total number of abstracts, 59 were selected for oral presentations, while 46 were accepted for poster sessions. The International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences in association with the European Section provided different awards from educational grants for speakers (funds for accommodation and hospitality for eight speakers in two scientific sessions, namely Sir Magdi Yacoub Symposia and George Jackowski Young Investigator Award Competition), and for

**BOHUSLAV OSTADAL AWARD**

Bohuslav Ostadal Award presented to Agrawal K. Devendra (Omaha, USA) for excellence in cardiovascular research (from left to right: Grant Pierce, Andras Varro, Agrawal Devendra, Bohuslav Ostadal).

**GUY VASSORT POSTER Awardees**

Stephanie Caligiuri (Winnipeg, Canada), Vivien Demeter-Haladka (Szeged, Hungary), Szilvia Déri (Szeged, Hungary), Maja Zivkovic (Belgrade, Serbia)

**JAN SLEZAK AWARD**

Jan Slezak Award presented to Monika Bartekova for Tanyia Ravingerova (Bratislava, Slovak Republic) for the excellence in cardiovascular research (from left to right: Grant Pierce, Monika Bartekova, Andras Varro, Naranjan Dhalla).

**ELIZABETH ROTH POSTER Awardees**

Teodora Hartai (Szeged, Hungary), Alexandra Petrus (Timisoara, Romania), Tamara Nikolic (Kragujevac, Serbia), Adrian Sturza (Timisoara, Romania)

**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD IN CARDIOVASCULAR SCIENCE, MEDICINE AND SURGERY**

Dragan M. Djuric (Belgrade, Serbia) was awarded with Lifetime Achievement Award in Cardiovascular Science, Medicine and Surgery (from left to right: Grant Pierce, Andras Varro, Dragan Djuric, Bohuslav Ostadal).
poster presenters as well (Guy Vassort Poster Award Session - awardees). Two individuals selected from the invited speakers list were awarded with Bohuslav Ostadal Award (Agrawal K. Devendra, Omaha, USA) and with Jan Slebak Award (Tatiana Ravingerova, Bratislava, Slovak Republic). For excellence in cardiovascular research. Dragan M. Djuric (Belgrade, Serbia) was awarded with Lifetime Achievement Award in Cardiovascular Science, Medicine and Surgery. Vladimir Lj. Jakovljevic (Kragujevac, Serbia) was awarded with Distinguished Leadership Award in Cardiovascular Sciences. Lifetime Achievement Award in Cardiovascular Science, Medicine and Surgery presented to Frank Kolbel (Prague, Czech Republic).

Certain number of presentations were selected to be published as a full-length papers in a special issue of the Canadian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology (in 2016), which is affiliated with the Canadian Society of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, the Canadian Physiological Society, and the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences. It should be also noted that social program was interesting and that the participants, as they said, had nice memories of bohemian quarter “Skadarlija”, tower “Avala” near Belgrade, fine restaurants (namely “Lovac”, “Milosev konak” and “Kumbara”), and unforgettably enjoyed delicious Serbian cuisine, folk and international music. Belgrade is not only the international city but really the very historical place where the most of participants found typical Serbian spirit of life also.

Cardiovascular sciences are undergoing many important changes during last decade. By using novel techniques we are gaining better understanding of mechanisms of normal functions and diseases of cardiovascular system, and enabling us to make better diagnoses. Physiologists, geneticists, molecular biologists, epidemiologists, nutritionists, pharmacologists, clinicians etc. are providing us with novel tools and knowledge that is improving our work; as cardiovascular scientists we have many interactions with other disciplines, and the evolution of our field has impact on medical decisions in everyday practice. We are sure that the general topics for the IACS Belgrade 2015 meeting really gave a contribution to the cardiovascular medicine. It is not easy to keep up with everything that is ongoing, but the IACS tries to serve also the educational needs for cardiovascular specialists. Moreover, the European Section of the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences feels strongly about the role of science in the developments that steer our practice. Thus, educational needs are always integrated in cardiovascular scientific progress.

New Corporate Member of IACS – ES

MDE Heidelberg - new brand for pharmacological and physiological measurements

In 2014 a new brand appeared up for those who are looking for devices to carry out professional physiological measurements on research and development or medical field. Their products are based on the 30 years’ experience of Experimetria Ltd. and the traditional German quality. Experimetria was delivering reliable, dedicated products for in vitro, in vivo pharmacological researches focused on cardiac and neural fields. As a result of a German private investment the company utilized the experience that was gained by supporting pharmacological researches with devices mainly for electrophysiology measurements and showed up with a new medical portfolio for cardiovascular analysis. The unique filtering and professional mechanical solutions are the guaranties to have the less noise and the precise data whether we are talking about an action requiring potential or pressure measurements. The fusion of the pharmacological researches and new human diagnostic portfolios allows the company to equip projects with devices from the pre-clinical phase to the final clinical phases. The offered products could be checked on www.mdegmbh.eu website. The company can carry out worldwide services concerning training, delivery, installation and local support.

Some examples for the most popular systems of the company:

- Research and Development systems:
  - In Vitro Isolated heart perfusion system
  - In vitro tissue slice analyses
  - In Vivo zebrafish ECG
  - In vivo haemodynamic systems

- Medical
  - Cardiac analyzer
  - Ergo stress systems
  - CAN Cardiovascular Autonomous Neuropathy analyzer
logues at the University of Sydney, he undertook a post-doctoral fellow-
and deserve our total support.

continue to improve our understanding of the cardiovascular system
several outstanding postgraduate students; these young scientists will
vascular disease. These studies were possible through the motivation of
evidence supporting the use of these functional foods in cardiovas-
will value-add to the agricultural produce of our region, providing the
anins from the Queen Garnet plum, a locally-bred cultivar, spices such
olenic acid, was just as effective as the longer-chain omega3 fatty acids
red wine. In addition, the plant-derived omega3 fatty acid, alpha-lin-
vonoids such as rutin, as well as oak-derived ellagitannins, could be
the changes throughout the body. Further studies suggested that fla-
that the anti-inflammatory responses to the anthocyanins producedr
was purple carrot juice, high in anthocyanins. The
returns to other natural products that are components of food. The
vascular changes were amazing, and, together with the normali-
sation of metabolic and liver changes in these obese rats, we suggested
that the anti-inflammatory responses to the anthocyanins produced the
changes throughout the body. Further studies suggested that flav-
onoids such as rutin, as well as oak-derived ellagitannins, could be
responsible for the cardiovascular, metabolic and liver changes with
red wine. In addition, the plant-derived omega3 fatty acid, alpha-lin-
olenic acid, was just as effective as the longer-chain omega3 fatty acids
from fish oil. Recent studies have shown the effectiveness of anthocy-
anins from the Queen Garnet plum, a locally-bred cultivar, spices such
as black cardamom as well as tropical seaweeds. We hope our studies
will value-add to the agricultural produce of our region, providing the
evidence supporting the use of these functional foods in cardiovas-
cular disease. These studies were possible through the motivation of
several outstanding postgraduate students; these young scientists will
continue to improve our understanding of the cardiovascular system
and deserve our total support.

Lindsay Brown PhD is the Professor of Biomedical Sciences at the University of Southern Queensland in Toowoomba, Australia. Lindsay’s family were farmers at Warwick, about 80 km south of Toowoomba. He went to the Warwick State High School and then The University of Queensland in Brisbane, where he graduated with First Class Honours in Pharmacy. After his PhD studies on semisynthetic digoxin ana-
logues with Professor Erland Erdmann at the Klinikum Grosshadern in Munich, Germany. He then took up a lectureship position in Pharmacology at The University of Queensland, where he taught undergraduate students in science, medicine, pharmacy, veterinary science and dentistry. In 2009, he moved to his current position. The teaching of pharmacology, especially the drugs that affect the cardiovascular system, has always been and remains a passion.

Undertaking research on the cardiovascular system is an essential foundation for the teaching of cardiovascular science at all levels from primary school students to doctoral students to early career research-
ers. My research started with a natural product, digoxin, and has now returned to other natural products that are components of food. The widespread realisation that obesity is an initiator of cardiovascular dis-
ease led us to investigate interventions in diet-induced obesity in rats as potential treatments for the epidemic of obesity in humans, aiming to decrease the incidence of cardiovascular disease. Our first interven-
tion, by accident, was purple carrot juice, high in anthocyanins. The
vascular changes were amazing, and, together with the normali-
sation of metabolic and liver changes in these obese rats, we suggested
that the anti-inflammatory responses to the anthocyanins produced the
changes throughout the body. Further studies suggested that fla-
onoids such as rutin, as well as oak-derived ellagitannins, could be
responsible for the cardiovascular, metabolic and liver changes with
red wine. In addition, the plant-derived omega3 fatty acid, alpha-lin-
olenic acid, was just as effective as the longer-chain omega3 fatty acids
from fish oil. Recent studies have shown the effectiveness of anthocy-
anins from the Queen Garnet plum, a locally-bred cultivar, spices such
as black cardamom as well as tropical seaweeds. We hope our studies
will value-add to the agricultural produce of our region, providing the
evidence supporting the use of these functional foods in cardiovas-
cular disease. These studies were possible through the motivation of
several outstanding postgraduate students; these young scientists will
continue to improve our understanding of the cardiovascular system
and deserve our total support.

Harpal S. Buttar DVM MSc PhD FICN FIACS received his degree in Veterinary Medicine in 1961 from the Punjab University, Chandigarh, India. Before coming to Canada, he was lecturer for about 2 years in the Department of Pharmacology (1961-63) in his first alma mater, College of Veterinary Medicine, Hissar. In January 1964, he was awarded an overseas scholarship by the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, where he completed his M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in Pharmacology in 1966 and 1970, respectively. After a post-doctoral stint at the Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, USA, he joined as a Research Scientist level-1 (August 1971) at the Health Protection Branch, Ottawa, and was promoted to the rank of Research Scientist level-5 in April 1997 (highest scientific rank in the Federal Govt.). He conducted in vitro and in vivo studies in Pharmacology as well as in Reproductive & Developmental Toxicology. He was Head of the Reproductive Toxicology Section from 1977-1991.

Dr. Buttar has worked as a Senior Scientist & Assessment Officer in the Therapeutic Products Directorate, Health Canada, and retired in January 2013. As an Assessment Officer, his roles and responsibilities included risk/benefit assessment of urology and anti-diabetic drugs, and hormonal contraceptive products, as well as regulatory decision making for the pre-marketing approval of drugs in the Reproduction & Urology Division, Bureau of Metabolism, Oncology and Reproductive Sciences. Additionally, he has a continuing interest in the R & D of drug discovery and in academic teaching. Since May 1994 - to date, he has held cross-appointment of Adjunct Professorship in the Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine, Medical College, University of Ottawa, Canada. Previously, he also held the positions of Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, and at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John’s, Canada. He is also a scientific consultant to the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada.

Based on his scientific accomplishments and distinguished contribu-
tions made in the field of Pharmacology, Toxicology, Clinical Nutrition,
and Cardiovascular Sciences, Dr. Buttar was awarded the Fellowship of the International College of Nutrition (FICN), October 2013, and was elected as Fellow of the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences (FIACS), October 2013. He also received Honorary Fellowship from the Punjab Academy of Sciences, February 2012. The Geriatric Society of India gave him the Award of Excellence in Science, at the International Conference on Geriatric Care held at Amritsar, November 2015.
2011. In June 2013, Dr. Buttar was appointed Visiting Professor in the Department of Pharmacology, School of Medicine, Democritus University of Thrace, Alexandroupolis, Greece. He is currently serving as Visiting Professor in the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU), Amritsar, Punjab, India. At GNDU, Professor Buttar teaches a special course in Basic & Clinical Pharmacology, and helps the M. Pharm. students in doing in vitro and in vivo studies and designing experimental protocols to evaluate the therapeutic potential of drugs and plant-derived products in animal models.

Dr. Buttar is a member of several professional societies and actively participates in the activities of these societies. In June 1983, he was elected as the First President of the Association of Scientists of Indian Origin in Canada. He has previously served on the Editorial Boards of several scientific journals and is presently serving on the Editorial Boards of 3 International Journals: The Open Nutraceuticals Journal; Journal of Complementary & Integrative Medicine; and Journal of Ayurvedic & Integrative Medicine. He is the author and co-author of three book chapters and 90 research and review papers published in peer-reviewed journals. Dr. Buttar has presented 168 papers at National and International Conferences, and has been guest speaker for 91 lectures, seminars, symposia, and workshops. He has been invited to give courses and workshops at many Canadian and American Universities in the area of Reproductive & Developmental Toxicology, and has made valuable contributions in the regulatory and clinical implications of Drug-Herbal/Food Interactions in humans. He has been frequently invited to give lectures/seminar concerning The Risks Associated With the Combined Use of Drugs and Herbal Remedies: Mechanisms of Interactions. Dr. Buttar is a scientist of international stature and has represented his Bureau at many national and international meetings and committees. He has served on international advisory boards and was involved in organizing national/international scientific conferences. He has chaired and co-chaired scientific sessions at many meetings. His biographical sketches have been published in: Directory of International Biography; Men of Achievement; and Men & Women of Science.

Dr. Buttar was external examiner for undergraduate and graduate students, including one doctoral thesis, and has mentored 25 co-operative education program students from different Canadian Universities. In October 2008, Health Canada gave him the Outstanding Mentor Award at the National Mentoring Program Ceremony, Ottawa, Canada.

In January 2014, the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences (India Section) established Dr. Harpal S. Buttar Oration Award to recognize his international leadership and outstanding contributions in promoting dietary interventions and lifestyle changes in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases and diabetes in Canada and around the world. The first Oration Award was given to Dr. K.K. Aggarwal, President Heart-Care Foundation of India and Senior Consultant in Medicine & Cardiology, Mooshand Hospital, New Delhi, India. The 2nd Oration Award was given to Prof. Devendra K. Agrawal, Creighton University School of Medicine, Omaha, Nebraska, USA.

Dr. Buttar’s pursuits are to promote excellence in education and research in pharmacology/toxicology and prevention of diabetes mellitus & cardiovascular diseases. To accomplish such objectives, he has established several merit awards through the Punjab Academy of Sciences and Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab, as well as in his native village, Bharowal, Punjab, India.

Dr. Buttar has been involved in many multicultural and community service organizations. He is recipient of the 10-, 15-, and 25-Years Volunteer Services Award from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture as well as the Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada. Based on his volunteer community services, he was appointed as Public Member at the Council of Dieticians of Ontario for a three-years-term (2004-2007), and Council of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario, Canada, by the Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for a four-years-term (2008-2012).

Distinctions Earned:
- WHO Fellow in UK
- Fellow of the Teaching Seminar on Cardiovascular Epidemiology and Prevention by World Heart Federation, Geneva
- Fellow of Indian Association of Biomedical Scientists
- Certificate of Appreciation for Hundred Percent Follow-up in VITATOPS Study and the contribution to medical research
- “Award of Excellence” in recognition for achieving the status of Excellent Case/Control Ratio by INTERSTROKE researchers in May 2008
- “Best Doctor Award” by The Tamilnadu Dr MGR Medical University on May 12, 2012
- Prof. G. Ananathasubramaniam Gold Medal Oration Award-2012 by The API Tamilnadu State Chapter

Administrative Experience In Professional Bodies/Conferences:
- Chairman, Academy of Medical Sciences, Rajah Muthiah Medical College, Annamalai University, Jan’08 to till date.
- Chairman, Rajah Muthiah Heart Foundation, since January 2008 to September 2013
- Organizing Chairman, Medical Services, 94th Indian Science Congress, Annamalai University, January 2007.
- Organizing Secretary, Cardiac Alert-2002, Cardiac Alert-2004, Mega-Cardiac Alert 2007.
- Chairman, Medical Education Unit, RMMC, Annamalai University
- Member, Steering Committee, National Tobacco Control Act, Ministry of Health and Family welfare, GOI, New Delhi, since 2006 to present
- Adviser in the Personality Test Board for assessing candidates who qualified in the “Combined Medical Services Examination in UPSC, New Delhi 2008 to present.
Innovative/International Programmes Organized:

- Rapid Access Chest Pain Clinic (First of its kind in the country): This facility created in the teaching hospital in 2002 has shortened the 'door to needle time' in patients with 'heart attacks' and reduced the complications and deaths in the Coronary Care Unit
- CARDIAC ALERT and MEGA-CARDIAC ALERT PROGRAMMES: These programs were organized to screen for cardiac problems especially coronary artery diseases to sensitize the general population and create awareness and to go for early treatment. Cardiac Alert-2002 was conducted to screen the University Staff and the beneficiaries were around 450. Cardiac Alert -2004 was conducted to screen the members of the public in and around Chidambaram and about 1500 individuals were screened, whereas Mega-Alert -2007 (a State-wide Comprehensive Cardiac Health Check-up) was held between May 16-29 in 27 Centres throughout the state of Tamil Nadu and around 8000 individuals were screened for heart ailments.
- TOFREDIN: Making 'Annamalai University a Tobacco FReEducational INstitution' to highlight the harmful effects of tobacco use to staff and students.
- Establishment of Biomedical Research Cell: A Biomedical Research Cell was established to plan and oversee research activities. New researches and projects were brought under this cell to facilitate the process of making proposals to funding agencies.
- International Symposium on “Cardiovascular Disease Prevention” – Organised between 21-02-2011 to 22-02-2011
- “Hypertension Screening Camp”-Organised on World Hypertension Day” i.e May 17, 2012
- Community Cardiac Health Check-up Unit: Under UGC XI Plan March 2010 to February 2012
- HEART (Healthy Eating Asians Remain Together) Study: A pilot study to analyze the nutritional risks related to Cardio-Metabolic Diseases (CMD/NCDs) in Indian population which revealed that the risk of high blood pressure in India is related to high salt intake as well as lower Magnesium intake. The technical guidance and support were provided by Prof Yukio YAMORI, Director, Institute of World Health Development, Japan.
- HEARTY (HEART Study in the Young): Based on the results of HEART Study the children (with low birth weight) were analyzed and the outcome indicate the necessity of Food Education in the young for the health promotion in Indian Adult population

Publications:

- Published 22 papers in international (which includes research publications) and 11 papers in national journals (Indexed)
- Published 16 articles in non-indexed journals / booklets.

Papers Presented/Conferences Attended:

- Attended Ten (10) International conferences / meetings, Twenty Four (24) National conferences and Nine (9) Regional conferences
- Delivered Twenty Eight (28) guest lectures and Nine (9) sessions chaired
- Participated in 12 National / International workshops and seminars
- Attended 21 National investigators’ meetings and 9 International Investigators’ meetings in connection with the International multi-centric clinical trials and projects

Academic Visits Abroad: Travelled to United Kingdom, Unite States of America, Canada, France, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Kathmandu-Nepal, Cairo-Egypt, Colombo-Sri Lanka, Istanbul-Turkey, Lisbon-Portugal & gained extensive cross-cultural exposure

Memberships in Professional Bodies: Life Member: Indian Medical Association, Indian Society of Hypertension, Indian Society of Atherosclerosis and Research, Indian Academy of Echocardiography, Paediatric Cardiac Society of India, Indian Society of Electrocardiography, International Medical Sciences Academy, Indian Science Congress and Indian Society of Cardiology

Jennifer L Hall PhD is Associate Professor of Medicine, Director, Program in Translational Genomics; Lillehei Heart Institute, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Publications can be found at Experts@Minnesota/Jennifer Hall.

Current Research Projects:

A group in the lab is interested in the signaling pathways through which pericytes and vascular smooth muscle cells regulate contractile properties, extracellular matrix and blood pressure. We are utilizing single cell genomics paired with different techniques including traction force microscopy and vascular muscle thin films in collaboration with the Alford lab (http://alfordlab.umn.edu/) to measure contractility in pericytes and vascular smooth muscle cells. We incorporate genetic mouse models and human cells and tissue.

A second project in the lab is focused on testing the role of bromodomain containing proteins on cardiac hypertrophy and disease. This is a collaboration with the Pomerantz lab (http://www.chem.umn.edu/groups/pomerantz/). We are specifically focused on the bromodomain containing protein, BPTF (bromodomain PHD finger transcription factor). We are using novel chemical screening approaches, x-ray crystallography, and genomic approaches including adenosine in cardiac myocytes and fibroblasts, and a generic mouse model.

A third project in the lab is focused on epigenetic and transcriptional mechanisms that regulate cholesterol metabolism and the anti-inflammatory profile of macrophages in atherosclerosis. We are focused on the regulation of a specific gene, Nuclear Receptor Interacting Protein 1 (RIP140), and its role in cholesterol metabolism and atherosclerosis. This project is a collaboration with the Wei lab www.pharmacology.med.umn.edu/fac_weil.html.

Joseph A Hill MD PhD is a cardiologist-scientist whose research focuses on molecular mechanisms of remodeling in the stressed myocardium. He graduated with an MD, PhD from Duke University. Next, he pursued postdoctoral scientific training at the Institut Pasteur in Paris, followed by clinical training in Internal Medicine and Cardiology at the Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School. Dr. Hill served on the faculty of the University of Iowa for 5 years before moving in 2002 to the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center to assume the role of Chief of Cardiology and Director of the Harry S. Moss Heart Center.

Dr. Hill’s research group strives to decipher mechanisms of structural, functional, and electrical remodeling in heart disease with an eye
toward therapeutic intervention. Dr. Hill serves on numerous committees, boards, and study sections, and he lectures widely. In addition, he serves on several editorial boards, including Circulation, Circulation Research, Journal of Biological Chemistry, and American Journal of Cardiology. He serves as editor-in-chief of a recently published textbook entitled Muscle: Fundamental Biology and Mechanisms of Disease. He has received numerous recognitions and awards, including election to the Association of American Professors; he recently served as President of the Association of University Cardiologists and chair of the Academic Council of the American College of Cardiology. He was recently named the next Editor-in-Chief of Circulation. Dr. Hill maintains an active clinical practice focusing on general cardiology, hypertension, and heart failure.

Krasimira Hristova MD PhD

Education:
Classical Gymnasium, Gorna Oriachovitza, 1984; MD – Medical University, Pleven 1984-1990; Diploma N= 00130/ 1990; Functional Diagnostic specialization, Medical University, Craiova, Romania, 1992; Internal Disease specialization ,Medical University, Sofia, 1996; Diploma N= 005445/01.01.1999; Cardiology specialization, Medical University, Sofia, 2006; Diploma N= 010493/01.01.2006; Research Fellow in 3D Echocardiography, Catholic University, Leuven, Belgium with Master degree in Advance on Medical Imaging, 2008-2009; PhD – National Heart Hospital, Sofia, 2010-2013; Appointed Associated Professor in National Heart Hospital, from May 5, 2013

Professional experience:
1990-1999 – Appointed physician at the City Hospital, Gorna Oriachovitza
1999- 2005 – Appointed consultant of internal medicine at the University Hospital of Neurology and Psychiatry
2006-2008 – Appointed cardiologist and Head of Department of Noninvasive functional and imaging diagnostics, National Hospital of Emergency Care
2008-2009 – Research Fellow in Echocardiography, Catholic University, Leuven , Belgium, Master Degree of Advance Medical Imaging
08 2009 to present – Appointed cardiologist, National Heart Hospital, Department of Noninvasive Diagnostic, Sofia, Expert of echocardiography
05 2013 to present – Head of Outpatient Clinic for Specialized Help – National Heart Hospital

Membership in professional organizations:
Bulgarian Society of Cardiology
Fellow of European Society of Cardiology
European Association of Echocardiography, Member of National Committee Board 2012-2014
American Society of Echocardiography, Member of Award Scientific Board from 2012, 2013, 2014
International Society of Hypertension
Bulgarian League of Hypertension
Member of Working Group for ACS/ESC
Member of Working Group for Hypertension and Heart / ESC
Member of Working Group of Peripheral Circulation / ESC
Member of European Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation
Secretary of Bulgarian Working Group of Echocardiography 2010-2012 and 2012-2014 , President-Elect of BWE 2014-2016
2013-2015, President of International College of Cardiology (ICC), founded in Slovakia
2013 and currently, Member of the Board of World Hypertension League (WHL)

Professional Awards:

Clinical Trials:
Co-investigator in First Clinical Trial of Irbesartan (Teveten) in Bulgaria, 2002; Investigator in Clinical Trial “Dependence of Carotid Atherosclerosis and risk factors in patients with Cardiovascular Diseases”, 2002-2006; Co-investigator in Bulgarian group of JUPITER – trial, 2006; Main investigator PEGASUS - TIMI 54 , 2011; Co -investigator CANTOS, 2012

Publications:
79 publications; 45 in local journals; 2 in international journals; 1 accepted in an international journal, in press; 2 accepted in local journals, in press; 52 posters at international congresses; 11 oral presentation at international congresses; 3 co-author in books; 1 book

Invited reviewer:
Reviewer for Archives of Medical Sciences 77 reviews
Reviewer for Medical Science Monitor – 2 reviews
Reviewer for The Open Cardiovascular Medicine Journal – 6 reviews
Co-Editor in Topmedica Journal, from 2010 and current
Co-Editor in Discovery Biology in Medicine, 2012
Co-Editor in Word Heart Journal, 2013

Madhu Khullar PhD has major research interest and contributions in molecular genetics and functional genomics of primary cardiomyopathies, diabetic Cardiomyopathy, essential hypertension, coronary artery disease (CAD), diabetic nephropathy and head and neck cancer. My group has identified novel mutations in several sarcomeric genes in patients with idiopathic cardiomyopathies and reported a wide heterogeneity in genotype-phenotype association in these diseases. We showed that certain modifier genes may contribute to this varied phenotypes. Further our data showed that at molecular level, these cardiomyopathies (HCM,DCM and RCM) may be similar. We have also shown that MTHFR genotypes and haplotypes are associated with increased risk of essential hypertension and diabetic nephropathy. We also reported that several genetic variants of HMGR, CETP, APOAI, ABCB1, CYP3A4, CYP7A1 genes were associated lipid lowering response to Atorvastatin therapy in CAD patients and a cumulative presence of pro atherogenic genetic variants increased the risk of CAD in patients. My group has also shown that genetic variants in RAS, inflammatory cytokine and oxidative stress pathways are associated with increased risk of diabetic nephropathy in type 2 diabetic patients. Currently, I am studying the role of microRNAs in dilated and Diabetic cardiomyopathies and results have been presented at various International meetings and communicated for publication. My current research projects include next generation sequencing as diagnostic tool for idiopathic cardiomyopathies, functional genomics of idiopathic cardiomyopathies, role of microRNAs in diabetic Cardiomyopathy and role of transcriptional factors in pathophysiology of cardiomyopathies.
**Ren-Ke Li MD PhD** is a Professor of Medicine in the Department of Surgery, Division of Cardiac Surgery at the University of Toronto as well as a Senior Scientist at the Toronto General Research Institute of the University Health Network working in the field of stem cell transplantation and tissue engineering.

Dr. Li completed his M.D. at Harbin Medical University in China and his Ph.D. in Clinical Biochemistry at the University of Toronto. He became an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto in 1993 and was promoted to Full Professor in 2002. He is also cross-appointed as a Full Professor in the Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology and the Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering at the U of T. He is the recipient of the Canada Research Chair in Cardiac Regeneration (Tier 1) of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and was a Career Investigator of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. In 2011, he was elected as a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Science as well as a Fellow of the American Heart Association. In 2012, he received the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medal from the Governor General of Canada.

Dr. Li has been on the forefront of the field of cell therapy and cardiac tissue engineering throughout his career. In 1996, Dr. Li published the first evidence that cells transplanted into an injured heart can form muscle tissue to regenerate the damaged heart and improve its function. Since muscle cells are the limited resource of heart repair in clinical applications, Dr. Li evaluated the feasibility of transplanting stem cells from bone marrow into injured hearts, and established the concept of stem cell therapy. He demonstrated the safety and efficacy of bone marrow stem cell therapy using porcine models, proving its potential for cardiac repair. Currently, his research group is attempting to rejuvenate the regenerative capacities of aged patients' hearts using young stem cells. Dr. Li has also developed a platform for targeted gene or regenerative factor delivery for the purposes of targeted tissue/organ therapy. Over the last 20 years, Dr. Li's research has led the development of cell therapy and cardiac tissue engineering from bench to bedside.

Dr. Li is an Associate Editor or Editorial Board member for 14 scientific journals. He has published 200 peer-reviewed papers and his work has appeared in numerous high impact journals. Dr. Li has been invited to contribute several commentaries and viewpoint articles and is an international opinion leader in his field.

**Ernest Madu MD** has had a distinguished career in clinical medicine and healthcare innovations. He is a pioneer in the development of healthcare infrastructure, health systems innovations and appropriate technology transfer to enhance quality and cost effectiveness of care in developing and low resource nations. He holds the academic rank of Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine and Imaging Technology and is respected globally for his contributions to cardiovascular medicine and health systems innovation. He is a leading expert in leveraging technology to bridge the access gap in quality healthcare delivery and has used his expertise in leading innovative and transformational healthcare projects in Africa and the Caribbean. He has won many honors and awards for his work.

In 2005, he established the Heart Institute of the Caribbean (HIC) in Jamaica. HIC is the leading center of excellence for cardiovascular care in the English Speaking Caribbean and has provided open and accelerated access to quality care to millions of residents. HIC has completely transformed cardiovascular care in the region and has saved thousands of lives. HIC is an open access facility and operates on the principle that no one should be refused treatment because of inability to pay and gives away more than USD 1.5 million yearly in free or subsidized care resulting in over USD 15 million given away in free or subsidized care over the past 10 years.

A few years ago, Professor Madu turned his focus on Nigeria, his home country. Recognizing that cardiovascular disease is one of the leading causes of premature death and disability in Nigeria, largely due to lack of access to basic cardiovascular diagnostic tools and services, Professor Madu established the DOCS VIP Clinic and Heart Centre in Enugu, Nigeria in 2013. The DOCS VIP Clinic and Heart Centre is an ultramodern, state of the art clinic, equipped with a robust telemedicine infrastructure, allowing patients to have consultations with leading experts in multiple specialties around the world without leaving home. To ensure easy access to services at the DOCS Heart Centre, a low cost membership plan was put in place so that members are able to get free and expedited access all year round. Professor Madu has also pioneered the establishment of a national medical call center (Doctors on Call Service) that will allow subscribers to access timely medical advice 24 hours a day. This service is expected to launch in 2016, and when launched, access to care will be greatly improved for large segments of the Nigerian society. Literally, a doctor will be in your pocket without limitation if you have a cell phone.

Professor Madu is frequently invited around the world to speak about disruptive approaches to healthcare delivery. His opinions are regularly sought by leading international organizations and think tanks like TED, World Policy Journal, General Electric, UNICEF, US-Africa Business Summit, World Healthcare Congress, The Commonwealth Fund and World Medical Tourism Association. Prof Madu has published more than 100 scientific papers in peer reviewed medical journals and his work has been profiled in leading journals and magazines. He is a Fellow of the American College of Cardiology, the European Society of Cardiology and the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh.

Dr Madu previously served on the academic faculty of Vanderbilt University Medical School and was on the Clinical Faculty at University of California as a member of the innovative Telemedicine team. While on the faculty at Vanderbilt University, Dr Madu recognized a major deficit in the training of black cardiovascular specialists. In collaboration with the Association of Black Cardiologists, he engineered the creation of the ABC/Vanderbilt/Meharry Cardiology Fellowship Program to redress the capacity issues with black cardiovascular specialists. This innovative program has become highly successful and has trained more black cardiologists in the USA than any other comparable program.

**Irving H. Zucker PhD** is the Theodore F. Hubbard Professor of Cardiovascular Research and Chairman of the Department of Cellular and Integrative Physiology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska. He has been Chairman since 1989. Dr. Zucker received his Ph.D. from New York Medical College in 1972. He continued his post doctoral training at the University of Nebraska Medical Center where he became a faculty member in 1973. Dr. Zucker has been involved in studies related to the neural regulation of cardiovascular function. His studies have revolved around cardiovascular reflex control of sympathetic nerve activity in animal models of chronic heart failure. He has been the recipient of a MERIT Award from the NHLBI, an Established Investigatorship from the American Heart Association, the Wiggers Award from the Cardiovascular Section of the American Physiological Society and the Carl Ludwig Award from the Neural Control and Autonomic Regulation Section of the American Physiological Society. He is currently an Editor in Chief of the American Journal of Physiology: Heart and Circulatory Physiology. He is a Past-President of the Association of Chairs of Departments of Physiology and a Past-President of the American Physiological Society.

**The 2015 Medal of Merit recipient, Dr. François Abboud, Iowa City, USA has also been elected as an IACS Fellow**
Remembering Someone Special

A Tribute to Laurentiu M. Popescu

The cellular and molecular medicine community lost the discoverer of the new type of cells called telocytes and a pioneer in understanding and developing molecular medicine, Professor Laurentiu M. Popescu, who passed away on August 3rd in his 71th year, after a short illness. He was born on April 15th, 1944, in Câmpulung Muscel, into an academic family. Since childhood, he demonstrated outstanding intellectual skills and a very pragmatic and analytical mind. He studied medicine at Carol Davila University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Bucharest, Romania, between 1961–1967, graduating as valedictorian. Before graduation, in 1966, he started to teach, thus putting the foundation of his future prodigious academic career. Beginning with 1967, he continuously developed his career at Carol Davila University of Medicine and Pharmacy as a researcher and educator. After graduation, he was drawn to research and specifically to smooth muscle research, and in 1971, he defended his doctoral thesis “Research on the structure-function correlations in the smooth muscle”, being the youngest MD PhD in Romania. Subsequently, he became Postdoctoral Fellow at Leiden University, Netherlands (1977) and Fogarty International Fellow at NIH, Bethesda, Maryland, USA (1981).

His youth is marked by great achievements, publishing in prestigious journals such as Journal of Cell Biology, Journal of Molecular and Cellular Cardiology, Cell and Tissue Research, Experimental Cell Research, Experientia, Zeitschrift für Zellforschung und Mikroskopische Anatomie. Admirer of G.E. Palade, whose questions represented for him real challenges, he dedicated himself to electron microscopy studies. At that time, he provided direct evidence for calcium accumulation inside the sarcoplasmic reticulum of smooth muscle and calcium immobilization in mitochondria of failing myocardium. Concomitant, he participated along with his mentors in organizing the 5th International Congress of Histochemistry and Cytochemistry (1976), where he established contacts with internationally renowned researchers, e.g. Prof. C. de Duve (Belgium), Prof. A. Novikoff (USA), Prof. T. Caspersion (Sweden), Prof. T.H. Schiebler (Germany), and Prof. P. van Duijn (Netherlands). Few years later, he formed his own research group, and, according to Ostrom and Insel, participated in revolutionizing the concept of caveolae: “The present renaissance in thinking of caveolae as organizing centers for signal transduction traces back to 1974 when Popescu et al. proposed that these structures were the sites of excitation-contraction coupling in smooth muscle”. He was also interested in myocardium and proposed the use of potassium channel openers in the prevention of injuries caused by processes of ischemia – reperfusion damage. Moreover, he was among the first to show the mechanism of action of nitroglycerin by the stimulation of the sarcolemmal Ca2+-extrusion ATPase in coronary smooth muscle. He became known in the in the field of molecular cardiology for pointing out the role of cGMP in vasodilatation via G-kinase. In 2012 he received the award of “Medal of Merit” from International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences for his outstanding achievements in cardiovascular education and research.


Professor Laurentiu M. Popescu was a prestigious academic teacher and a great scientific orator. No student or researcher that heard his lectures left without being impressed and with new scientific challenges. His concise lectures were easy to follow and understand, many from the audience being able to remember them almost in extenso. He had a unique ability to turn complicated things into simple explanations and he was a mentor in the truest sense of the word. He was always surrounded by a young team, many PhD students and postdocs passed through his lab and benefited from his guidance in scientific work. He spent long hours in the lab working late hours, including week-ends and on holidays, and sometimes buying reagents and even paper, with his own money, to finalize the research.

Professor Laurentiu M. Popescu was also involved for many years in several administrative positions as dean of the Faculty of Medicine (1990-1992) and rector of “Carol Davila”, Bucharest (1992-2004). During this period he fought to develop Carol Davila University: he introduced computers in the university and modernized many departments, being a promoter of young researchers and teaching staff.

In recent years he described a new type of cell, the telocyte, whose research is ongoing in more than 40 laboratories across five continents. The most active countries in telocytes research are: China, Germany, Belgium, Italy, USA, Spain and Singapore. Initially, starting his studies by looking for cells similar with the interstitial cell of Cajal, he described the so-called interstitial Cajal-like cells (2005-2009) in organs outside the digestive tract. Later on, in 2010, he and his team realized that by serendipity they discovered a whole new type of cell, and he decided give it a new name. For the name to be successful it must have several characteristics: it should be brief, it should speak for itself and with regard to a cell, and the suffix “cyte” is required. Therefore, a prefix which highlights the most specific features and differentiators was necessary. Since these entirely new cells (completing different from the classical cells of Cajal) have extra-long cytoplasmic extensions at ultramicroscopic scale he thought of using the Greek prefix telos. The word telos was used by Herodotus, Aristotle, the most famous thinker of Antiquity and even by Homer in the “Iliad and Odyssey”. Telos means to accomplish, solve anything away, either in space or in time, and therefore it best suits the new cells which are focused on intercellular signaling, either by direct contact (junctions) with surrounding elements or at long distance by release of extracellular vesicle. He used to say “The shortest definition of telocytes is cells with telopodes” (hundreds of micrometers of cytoplasmic extensions). Without using hyperbole, we can say that professor Popescu was the “father of Telocytes”. Both of us (Sandra M. Cretoiu and Dragos Cretoiu) have been working on telocytes from the very beginning and we were amazed by his creative mind and rigorous demands.

Professor Popescu acquired a lot of experience in the publishing field as a member in the Editorial Board of many renowned scientific journals, such as Acta Histochemica and Cytochemistry (Japan); Cell Transplantation (USA); Chinese Journal of Clinicians (China); Comments on Molecular and Cellular Biophysics (The Netherlands); International Journal of Translational Medicine (USA); Italian Journal of Anatomy and Embryology (Italy); Langenbeck Archives of Surgery (Germany); World Journal of Stem Cells (China); World Journal of Methodology (China). He also acted as reviewer for many Journals
Dr. Miroslav Barančík received the Distinguished Leadership Award at the Smolenice Meeting in September, 2015

Dr. Miroslav Barančík was born in 1962 in Trenčianske Teplice, Slovakia. In years 1982-1987 he studied at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava and after finishing the studies he received the degree Doctor rerum naturalium (RNDr.) in biochemistry. In 1987 he joined Institute of Experimental Surgery of Slovak Academy of Sciences (since 1990 Institute for Heart Research SAS – IHR SAS) where he finished in 1995 his PhD studies and obtained PhD degree. The D.Sc. degree in Biochemistry he received in 2010. The scientific career of Dr. Barančík has been always very closely connected with the IHR SAS where he became in 2000 the Chief of the Laboratory of Protein Chemistry and since 2010 is in position of the Director of the IHR SAS.

Dr. Barančík is an expert in field of intracellular signaling and his research activities are focused on the cellular and molecular mechanisms underlying adaptation of cells to stress conditions. He participated in the studies that provided evidence for important role of signaling cascades (such as mitogen-activated protein kinases, PI3K/Akt kinase pathway) in cardiac pathophysiology and he contributed significantly to the elucidation of signaling pathways underlying the myocardial adaptation to acute and chronic pathological conditions. In frames of scientific cooperation with group of Prof. Schaper (Department of Experimental Cardiology, Bad Nauheim, Germany) he was also involved in characterization of signaling pathways involved in ischemic preconditioning in the heart and in identification of potential cellular targets for treatment.

During his scientific career, he has published more than 55 articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals, 10 chapters in collective volumes, 1 book chapter, more than 150 abstracts, and these publications were cited about 800-times. He has delivered many lectures at national and international conferences, universities and institutions.

Professional activities of Dr. Barančík also include membership in editorial board of journal General Physiology and Biophysics, Scientific board of Slovak Academy of Sciences for Molecular Biology and Genetics, and he is or was member of several professional associations such as Scientific Grant Agency of the Slovak Republic (Commission for medical and pharmaceutical sciences), Slovak Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Slovak Physiological Society, International Society for Heart Research. Dr. Barančík has been honored with important awards and distinctions from the scientific societies in recognition of his achievements and services, including Ján Jessenius Honorary Plaque for outstanding achievements in medical sciences of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Award of the Slovak Physiological Society for the best publication in the year 2005, etc.

Superb Tribute to Dr. Naranjan S. Dhalla

Dr. Naranjan S. Dhalla, Distinguished Professor of Physiology, University of Manitoba, and Director of Cardiovascular Developments, St-Boniface Hospital Research was honored at the 2nd European Section Meeting of the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences, held October 8-10, 2015 at the Hotel Crowne Plaza in Belgrade, Serbia.

Dhalla was presented with a plaque of appreciation for establishing the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences, as well as a video featuring well-wishes from top researchers in the European cardiovascular research community, including Dr. Andras Varro (Hungary), Dr. Jan Sletak (Slovakia), Dr. Danina Muntean (Romania), Dr. Dragan Djuric (Serbia), Dr. Vladimir Jakovljevic (Serbia), Dr. Bohuslav Ostadal (Czech Republic), and Dr. Tatiana Ravingerova (Slovakia).

Visit www.sbrc.ca/2015/10/dhalla-honored-in-belgrade-iacs to enjoy this well done initiative.
MAQ Siddiqui: A Journey to the Heart of Molecular Cardiology

Jason Lazar MD

Frequently seen walking to and from his laboratory on the second floor corridor of the basic science building is Dr. MAQ Siddiqui, Chairman of Anatomy and Cell Biology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center. Although calm, mild mannered and soft spoken, his research contributions echo loudly through the second floor corridors to the national stage of prominence and across to the international scientific community. Despite his own humble assessment, there is a gleam of pride in the eyes of Dr Siddiqui in recounting the scientific journey that he first embarked on exactly five decades ago. A scientific journey still traveled today long and far to the heart of molecular cardiology.

“Sid”, as he is nicknamed, grew up in India. While attending high school in Hydropod, he had developed a deep curiosity about western culture and a deep thirst for learning about its ways. After long days of studies, Sid would either walk or bicycle ride several miles in the dark to the United States Information Service (USIS). He read widely on a variety of topics ranging from Dwight D. Eisenhower to John F. Kennedy, from the Korean War to the Cold War, and from McCarthyism to Marilyn Monroe. It was at the USIS that Sid first read about the discovery of the helical structure of DNA by Watson and Crick at the Cavendish Laboratory at the University of Cambridge in 1953. Young MAQ Siddiqui became most fascinated with this revelation. His interest in the biomedical sciences grew as he began to believe that DNA science was the key to understanding illness and disease.

Against his father’s advice, he declared his preference for research over clinical medicine. Obstinate but resourceful, Sid set out to combine his two fascinations: science and western culture. In 1960, he traveled from Southern India via Italy, France and England to New York and ultimately to Houston by way of train, plane, and Greyhound bus. One month after his original departure, he arrived in Houston with $3.65 in his pocket and as he describes it the “world of opportunity” at his feet.

Sid recalls immigration to the United States being somewhat of a difficult transition, a situation that was likely helped by his cool, calm demeanor. Adapting to a new culture also posed some humorous moments. In need of an immediate source of income, Sid first took a job pumping gas at a Gulf station. On his second day of work, Sid came upon a car seemingly without a gas cap. After an exhaustive search, his boss relented, laughed, and showed Sid the gas cap hiding underneath the flip-up license plate. Gulf’s loss proved to be University of Houston’s gain as Dr Siddiqui’s career in petroleum distribution lasted only long enough for him to land a research assistant position in the department of chemistry of the same institution. Several years later, MAQ Siddiqui received his Ph.D. degree from the University of Houston in 1967.

From Texas, Sid next moved to the University of California at Berkeley to complete his post-doctoral work. Berkeley provided two major attractions: multiple Nobel laureates and Tom Jukes, his future mentor. Dr. Jukes immediately developed a fondness for the aspiring scientist and provided MAQ with a room to live in his basement and textbooks to read. In return, MAQ worked day and night in Juke’s laboratory to achieve unsurpassed levels of productivity. All was well until six months later Jukes discovered that Sid had worked and worked and only worked. So much for his fascination with western culture. A bit annoyed, Jukes proclaimed “son, it’s time you take some time off to go see the Golden Gate bridge and Yosemite Park”. In Sid’s words, Jukes was “a big inspiration who was like a father to me”.

Dr. Siddiqui was nicknamed as “Sid” while attending the University of Houston as a new graduate student in the Southern city of Houston where segregation was still in practice. He had developed a deep curiosity about Southern culture and a thirst for learning about its ways. He read widely on a variety of topics ranging from the Korean War to the Cold War, from McCarthyism to Edward R. Murrow and importantly from the helical structure of DNA to the advent of molecular biology. Young MAQ became fascinated with these revelations. Obstinate, but resourceful, Dr. Siddiqui set out to fulfill his ambitions traveling from the Southern seaport in India to New York and ultimately to Houston with $3.00 in his pocket and as he describes it the “world of opportunity” at his feet. Several years later, MAQ received his Ph.D. degree from the University of Houston in 1967.

Dr. Siddiqui’s research accomplishments have been extraordinary. From Texas, he moved to the University of California at Berkeley to complete his post-doctoral work. Berkeley provided two major attractions: multiple Nobel laureates and superb faculty under whose tutelage he began his post-doctoral training. Three years later, he was recruited to join the faculty of the prestigious Roche Institute of Molecular Biology where he prospered and made several seminal findings. Consequently, he ascended to the rank of Full Member (Full Professor). Using the most sophisticated techniques, he cleared the DNA molecule into sub-fragments to learn the loss of function in a reconstituted in vitro system. The work was cited in the editorial section of “Nature”.

The journey continued past another milestone in 1975 when Dr. Siddiqui’s lab was the first to isolate and clone the gene for cardiac myosin light chain-2 (MLC2). Its characterization in his lab is considered most comprehensive among the eukaryotic genes. His contributions in this area have solidified his place among the modern molecular cell biologists. His interest in low molecular weight nuclear RNAs led to identification of 7S RNA which he proposed to be involved in early morphogenesis of the heart in avian development. Although it originally met with skepticism and was not widely accepted, over the years there has been growing acceptance and interest in the role of several small nuclear RNAs that have been documented to play a role in development.

The longstanding interest of Dr. Siddiqui has been to understand the molecular basis of pathogenesis of myocardial hypertrophy. Using myocardial cells in culture and experimental animal models, he has.... Continued on next page
demonstrated the regulatory linkage between the Jak/STAT signal transcription pathway and activation of renin-angiotensinogen system (RAS) that led to new insights into the mechanisms dictating the role of heart-localized RAS and activation of signaling events. The RAS was shown to be a strong stimulus of the left ventricular hypertrophy (LVH). The gene specific animal transgenic models were produced in the Siddiqui’s lab wherein the dynamic association/dissociation of an inhibitory protein (CLP-1) with P-TEFb plays was documented.

Dr. Siddiqui’s scientific contributions have been remarkable, and research was thorough, comprehensive and technically excellent. His contributions in understanding the molecular basis of cardiac hypertrophy and elucidation of functions of the regulatory molecules became the cornerstone of molecular cardiology. More recently, he shifted his interest to skeletal myogenesis and cell regeneration. Using the mouse model of muscle cell injury, he identified CLP-1 (aka HEXIM1), the inhibitory component of the positive transcription elongation complex (P-TEFb) as a pivotal regulator of skeletal muscle cell regeneration. Upon transplantation of CLP-1-hapalodeficient satellite cells, the injured muscle exhibited improved cell regeneration. The findings provide the mechanistic details and the crucial role of CLP-1 in control of satellite cells and offers the prospects of therapeutic intervention of degenerative muscle disorders.

Dr. Siddiqui has published about 140 scientific papers and review articles and book chapters, most of them have appeared in stringent scientific journals such as Nature, J. of Biological Chemistry, Proceedings of National Academy of Science USA, Developmental Biology, J. Molecular Biology, Molecular and Cellular Biology, Circulation, and Circulation Research. He is frequently invited to present his findings at major international meetings and symposia such as Gordon Research Conference, Keystone Symposia, and Am. Heart Association. He has served as consultant and as reviewer of research grants meetings at NIH.

Dr. Siddiqui’s intuitive understanding and perception of complex problems has not only facilitated his own research but has stimulated enormous growth in his students, clinical fellows and post-doctoral fellows, many of whom have been placed at prestigious research centers.

IACS Fellow appointed as a Division Head

Dr. Dinender Singla received his B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees from Punjabi University, Patiala, India and his Ph.D. from the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, India. He held post-doctoral fellowship positions in different Universities in Canada. He was joined as a tenure track Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Vermont in 2004. His current position at the University of Central Florida is a Professor of Medicine. His major area of research is related to stem cells, heart failure, diabetes, inflammation and cardiac regeneration. He is continuously serving to review the grants for various NIH, AHA, ministry of Italian health, and Hong Kong study sections. He is an Academic Editor for PLoS one, Associate Editor for Canadian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology as well as he is serving on the Editorial board member for different journals such as American Journal of Physiology: Heart and Circulatory. He is a chair, TPIG committee, American Physiology Society and also currently is a secretary North American section of the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences. He is a Fellow OF IACS. He is a reviewer for different journals. He served as a chair for various scientific sessions throughout the world. He has also organized a scientific conference. He is an author or coauthor for more than 74 peer reviewed papers.

IACS extends sincere appreciation to the Levit Family and St. Boniface Hospital Research for support of the 2nd Yetta and Jack Levit Distinguished Lecture

The distinguished lecture continues the Yetta and Jack Levit Program for Promotion of Heart Health in Manitoba by the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences.

Dr. John Cairns – Cardiologist, Scientist and President of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences delivered an extraordinary talk: “Can Aspirin prevent heart attacks without causing more harm than good?”

Dr. Arnold Naimark ( R ) introduced Dr. Cairns. Both were effusive in their praise of the Levit family for their leadership in funding IACS efforts to educate Manitobans about Heart Health. Dr. Cairns proudly shared his gratitude for support with Yetta Levit surrounded by her children – Diane ( L ), Keith and Shelley.

The Yetta and Jack Levit Distinguished Lectures can be enjoyed at: www.sbre.ca/1/watch/399.aspx
Invitation to attend meeting of India Section IACS

Major Thrust area targeted
Basic experimental to translational clinical aspects of hypertension, heart failure, ischemic heart disease, myocardial infarction, arrhythmia, metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular complications of diabetes, atherosclerosis, and vascular abnormalities area were targeted. Morever, poster and oral session on major thrust area will be organized during these two days Conference.

Who Should Attend
This seminar is intended for the cardiologists, pharmacologists, researchers, academicians, professionals and students in the field of cardiovascular and allied health care and virtually for everyone who wants to hone their knowledge regarding cardiovascular field.

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Preamble
The prevalence of heart failure in India due to coronary heart disease, hypertension, obesity, and diabetes ranges from 1.3 to 4.6 million. According to Heart Care Foundation of India, every year cardiovascular diseases cause 2.4 million mortalities. It is estimated that by 2030 heart disease will account for 25% of deaths in India. To mitigate the dire consequences of current cardiovascular condition in future, International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences (IACS) India section has initiated various programs on several aspects of cardiovascular diseases.

This meeting will give momentum to the cardiovascular education, research and ultimately will lead to betterment in patient care in Gujarat and India. It will act as a common discussion and deliberation ground in India for national and international cardiologists and cardiovascular researchers. Cardiologist and other healthcare specialist of the cardiovascular system will learn new clinical treatment and management strategies for their patients. Researchers from world over will abreast themselves of the new research areas and targets being explored. During networking sessions scientists will communicate with the experts in the field which will help address the issues and thus solutions can be sought. To facilitate further fruitful translational research in cardiovascular world, young investigators will be felicitated for their commendable research work.

The parallel symposium on “Diabetes and Cardiovascular complications” will be steered by renowned diabetologists of India.

How to reach milk city of Gujarat?
The Institute is situated in the heart of Anand city as a part of Shri Ramkrishna Sava Mandal campus, near an area known as Town hall, at a distance of about 3 kms from the Anand Railway Station.

For further details, kindly visit website www.apc.ac.in

Young Scientist Award
(Age limit 35 years)
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- Two best Podium presentation
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Key Dates
Abstract Submission Open: 07 September 2015
Abstract Submission Deadline: 30 November 2015
Intimation of Acceptance/ Rejection: 15 December 2015
Registration Closes: 31 December 2015

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Printed in Canada – ISSN 1683-0784 Publications Agreement # 40804514