

AWNings

The Newsletter of the Academic Women's Network at Washington University School of Medicine

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2007-2008 AWN Board

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Two Female Endowed Chairs Named

Until recently, there were 157 endowed professors at Washington University School of Medicine. Out of these 157 endowed professors only 9 (6%) of them were women.

Now, this number has increased to eleven (7%). Two distinguished women faculty members were named last month to new endowed Professorships. Both of these professorships have been named for outstanding past women faculty members.

Jean Schaffer, M.D. Professor of Medicine, Molecular Biology & Pharmacology was installed as the **Virginia Minnich Professor** on February 26th. Dr. Schaffer's laboratory has focused on models of diabetes and obesity. Their goal is to characterize the fundamental cellular mechanisms of lipotoxicity, and to understand how these processes contribute to organ dysfunction in rodent models of metabolic disease.

Helen Piwnica-Worms, Ph.D. Professor of Cell Biology and Physiology was installed as the **Gerty Cori Professor** on February 27th. (See page 5 for release of the Gerty Cory stamp by the U.S. Post Office.) Dr. Piwnica-Worms' laboratory is interested in how the human cell division cycle is regulated and how perturbations in cell cycle control contribute to human cancer.

Congratulations to these two outstanding women!



Jean Schaffer



Helen Piwnica-Worms

From the President's Desk

by Ingrid Borecki, Ph.D.

How can we, as an organization, help raise the cachet of women at Washington University? This is an important objective for the Academic Women's Network, as it advances our mission to foster the professional stature of our female faculty and it reinforces the image of the successful professional woman. One of the most tangible ways to accomplish this is to nominate women for the wide variety of awards, recognitions, and honors that are given each year. Throwing the spotlight on these deserving women by having outside acknowledgement of their outstanding contributions to biomedical science, leadership, and service draws local and even national attention and reminds us how lucky we are to have amongst us such outstanding female colleagues.

This year, for the first time, the AWN has formed a Nominating Committee whose charge is to identify worthy candidates and to be ready to prepare nomination packages consisting of letters, resumes, and CVs, often on short deadlines. While this may seem like just so much busy-work, the payoff is great: the institution's reputation is enhanced, successful women get the recognition they deserve, and students and trainees find outstanding role models.

However, we need your help. We need to know the identity of these outstanding investigators and mentors and what makes them so. I ask you all to stop a moment and look around and appreciate your colleagues – or yourself! – and drop us a line.

Tell us who has been doing great work, is an outstanding teacher, or who inspires those around her. This will help us be prepared when those calls for nominations come out, and submissions are due within 5 days!

AWN also does its part in recognizing inspirational mentors and leaders at the annual Spring Dinner. The **AWN Mentor Award** is intended to recognize an individual who has served as an outstanding mentor to a female Washington University faculty member or trainee. This award is distinct from a teaching award in that nominees should mentor in every sense of the word, not simply through teaching responsibilities. The **AWN Leadership Award** is given each year to one woman in the graduating class of the M.D. program and one woman in the graduating class of the Ph.D. program at Washington University School of Medicine who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in service to, or in the advancement of women within the community. In 2007, the Award was named to memorialize Rosalind Kornfeld, Ph.D., the founding President of AWN, as well as a valued colleague and mentor to many women scientists at Washington University. The call for nominations is out, and I urge everyone to take the time to bring our attention to the outstanding amongst us.

These women are a light for us all – they serve as role models for the next generation and prove that not only can it be done, but it can be done very well indeed. Tell us about it!

Kudos

Linda Pike, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Biochemistry & Molecular Biophysics, was selected by the Washington University School of Medicine Class of 2010 to receive a Distinguished Service and Teaching Award for her teaching the last academic year. This is the tenth year that Dr. Pike has received this award.

Angela M. Sharkey, M.D. Associate Professor of Pediatrics was highlighted in the Washington people section of the January 17th 2008 Record.
<http://record.wustl.edu/news/page/normal/10759.html>

Gladys Tse, M.D., Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, was named Clinical Lecturer of the Year by the Class of 2008.

Denise E. Wilfley, Ph.D., Director of the Weight Management and Eating Disorders Program at the School of Medicine was highlighted in the December 3, 2007 Washington people section of The Record for her work finding effective treatments for significant public health problems such as obesity and eating disorders.

<http://record.wustl.edu/news/page/normal/10672.html>

Salaries for Women Still Behind

Several studies have recently been published that examine why women still lag behind in salary. The first, “**Behind the Pay Gap**” published by the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation (www.aauw.org) and written by Judy Goldberg and Catherine Hill is a comprehensive review of data. The study finds that one year out of college, women who work full time earn only 80% as their male colleagues. Ten years later that number falls to 69%. Controlling for hours, occupation, parenthood, and other factors, women still earn less than their male peers. In the biological sciences women earn only 75% as men.

Interestingly, the authors found inequities between motherhood and fatherhood. Motherhood entails significant personal and economic sacrifices. Fatherhood on the other hand, appears to engender a “wage premium”. Men appear to spend *more* time at the office after becoming a parent whereas women spend considerably less time.

The authors state that women need to become advocates for themselves and others in their workplace by gathering data and speaking up if inequities are found.

Two additional studies also examine the pay gap issue. A study by Dorceta Taylor (BioScience, 2007;57:175-185) showed that more women than men in science and engineering programs expected to receive a lower salary. 39% of women said they would accept a minimum salary \$30,000-39,000, while only 29% of men said they would accept that range.

Another study by Hannah Riley Bowles (Organ Behav Hum Decis Process 2007;103:84-103) demonstrated that women were less inclined to negotiate salaries.

Women are less likely to ask for a raise and nervousness was cited as the reason rather than the belief that they would be denied the request. One potential reason for such nervousness was that both men and women said they didn’t want to work with women who negotiated. Women who asked for raises were perceived at “less nice, or overly demanding”. This perception was not the same if a man negotiated.

For more on this topic visit:

http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/ksgpress/update/winter2006/stories/q_a.htm

“Leadership Tips for Academics in Medicine” Seminar

AWN sponsored a seminar entitled “Leadership Tips for Academics in Medicine” on January 30th. The seminar was given by **Linda B. Cottler**, Ph.D., professor of epidemiology in psychiatry and past president of the AWN.

In 2006, Dr. Cottler was selected to attend the Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) Program for Women, sponsored by Drexel University College of Medicine. ELAM’s year-long program develops the professional and personal skills required to lead and manage successfully in today’s complex healthcare environment, with special attention to the unique challenges facing women in leadership positions.

Dr. Cottler shared her experiences in this program as well as some “pearls” of academic leadership. She began her seminar with the statement that “*Leadership is action, not position*”. This is a useful

piece of advice to remember as we strive to improve our leadership skills. The seminar included quotes and strategies from well-known leadership experts such as Collins, Bushe, Goldsmith and others.

Among her “pearls” were tips such as: “Get the right people on the bus and then get them into the right seat”; meaning find good people to work with you and give them jobs that they can excel at. “Develop an attitude of gratitude”; meaning acknowledge the people that help you do your job and you are grateful for. Also, “Talk like a leader”, “mentor the inexperienced” and “say no powerfully, but kindly”.

In summery, Dr. Cottler suggested that we should all “Reflect, renew, and recalibrate” our leadership style to maximize our effectiveness and success.

For more information about ELAM, visit:

<http://www.drexelmed.edu/elam/home.html>)

The Scientist: Fixing the Leaky Pipeline

An article in the January 2008 issue of *The Scientist* examines the question “Why aren't there many women in the top spots in academia?” The article lists three central reasons and gives suggestions how to address each of these problems.

1) One of the most significant leaks in the pipeline occurs during the postdoc to tenure-track transition (*EMBO Reports*, 8:977-81, 2007). This leak is attributed largely to the fact that the postdoctoral period coincides with prime childbearing years.

2) Women receive less money per grant and publish fewer papers. Women scientists, on average, do produce fewer publications than men (*EMBO reports*, 8:982-7, 2007). Why is that? One reason suggested is that women, on average, devote more time to teaching and mentoring than men. Another is that women value advising students while men give greater emphasis to competition.

3) Finally, the article states that women are not recognized with awards and speaking invitations as often as men. This has led to the stereotype that women scientists are less prestigious.

To read the full article, go to: <http://www.the-scientist.com/2008/01/1/67/1/>

Harvard Surgeon Claims Gender Bias at Prestigious Hospital

Sagun Tuli, M.D., an assistant professor of surgery at Harvard Medical School, filed a complaint this month alleging that Arthur Day, M.D., chief of neurosurgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital, has made derogatory comments and retaliated against her complaints by paying her less than her male colleagues and not giving her sufficient time to conduct research.

Two other complaints of gender bias in the Brigham's neurosurgery department are also pending with the commission, the Boston Herald reports.

To read the full article go to:

<http://blogs.wsj.com/health/2007/12/31/harvard-surgeon-claims-gender-bias-at-prestigious-hospital/>

Did you know ...

That you are welcome to attend any AWN Board meeting? The meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7:15 am in Room 10-107 10th floor of the McDonnell Pediatrics Building.

Call for AWN Awards

Each year, the AWN selects recipients for: The **AWN Mentor Award** which is intended to recognize an individual who has served as an outstanding mentor to a female Washington University faculty member or trainee; and two **Rosalind Kornfeld AWN Leadership Awards** which are given each year to one woman in the graduating class of the M.D. program and one woman in the graduating class of the Ph.D. program at Washington University School of Medicine who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in service to, or advancement of women within the community.

Nominations should be sent to Ingrid Borecki, iborecki@wustl.edu or Box 8506 by **March 19th**.

Renew Your AWN Membership

Spring is the time for our Annual Membership drive. Don't forget to renew your membership and encourage a colleague to become a new member.

Please submit Membership Form and a personal check for \$35 (or \$150/5 years) payable to “Academic Women's Network” to the AWN Treasurer, Leesa Galatz, at Box 8233. Membership forms can be found at the AWN website.

<http://awn.wustl.edu/>

Post Office to Release Gerty Cori Stamp

Gerty Cori, M.D. (1896-1957), was the first woman in America to receive a Nobel Prize. At Washington University, in collaboration with her husband Carl, the Coris made important discoveries that later became the basis for our knowledge of how cells use food and convert it into energy. Their work also contributed to the understanding and treatment of diabetes and other metabolic diseases.

In 1931 Carl Cori became chairman of the Department of Pharmacology. University rules at the time prohibited faculty appointment of two members of the same family, so Gerty was hired as a research fellow in Pharmacology. In the early 1940s they moved to the department of Biological Chemistry. Gerty Cori was promoted to the rank of professor of Biological Chemistry in July 1947, the same year she was awarded the Nobel Prize.

The 2008 stamp program recognizes a range of subjects as diverse as America itself, from the Chinese Lunar New Year celebrated in Chinatowns all over the country, to 20th century movie icons and literary figures, to the flags of our states and territories.



Gerty Cori Stamp to be released March 6, 2008

“**T**his stamp series celebrates our greatest creative minds, our groundbreaking heroes, and the places, institutions and values that have made us who we are,” said Postmaster General John Potter. “We’re proud to be able to highlight noteworthy parts of our shared American history on stamps that people will use every day to connect with family and friends.”

Taken from:

<http://www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/2008stamps/downloadcenter.htm>

And

<http://beckerexhibits.wustl.edu/mowihsp/bios/cori.htm>

Seven Women Given New Faculty Recognition Awards

The School of medicine recently created new faculty recognition awards. The awards were created to enhance recognition and appreciation for the School of Medicine's highly accomplished faculty.

Eighteen School of Medicine faculty were recognized Jan. 23 with the first Distinguished Faculty Awards. Of the eighteen awards given, seven were to female faculty.

Female Awards winners include:

-Distinguished Clinician Award-

Heidi Prather, D.O., associate professor of orthopaedic surgery

Shirley Sahrman, Ph.D., professor of physical therapy

-Distinguished Community Service Award-

Linda B. Cottler, Ph.D., professor of epidemiology in psychiatry

Katie Plax, M.D., assistant professor of pediatrics

Consuelo Hopkins Wilkins, M.D., assistant professor of medicine

-Distinguished Educator Award-

Barbara S. Monsees, M.D., the Ronald and Hanna Evens Professor of Women's Health and professor of radiology

-Distinguished Investigator Award-

Jeanne M. Nerbonne, Ph.D., the Alumni Endowed Professor of Molecular Biology and Pharmacology

New Year's Reception for Women in Science & Medicine

On January 9th, the AWN co-sponsored the annual New Year's Reception for women in Science in Medicine with the Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA), the Office of Post Graduate Affairs (OPGA), the Association for Women in Science (AWIS), and the Division of Biology and Biomedical Sciences Diversity Programs Office. As always, this was a great time to meet women from the School of Medicine.

This year, Dr Barbara Zehnbauer, Ph.D. Professor of Pathology and Immunology and Director of the BJH Molecular Laboratory gave the remarks. Below is a summary of her inspirational comments.

1. **Do what you love.** Try to start most mornings eager to get to work with an enthusiasm about your work. Have faith in yourself and the value of your work. Seek an environment where you and your work are valued.
2. **Network.** At your institution, at national meetings, through professional listserves, etc. Networking with peers and colleagues is an invaluable source of inspiration, collaboration, and identification of resources. This can help to provide perspective about your work in the broader landscape of medicine and research.
3. **Seek diversity** in people, ideas and resources. Insight or advances in your discipline may come from many directions. Maintain an intellectual curiosity about many aspects of medical research and develop approaches that enhance the standard roadmaps. For example, NIH is not the only funding agency, academia is not the only intellectual venue, research is not the only rewarding activity. Pay attention to the broader issues in science and healthcare and position your work to take advantage of opportunities.



4. **Accept and learn from failures.** Sometimes in-depth understanding only comes from breaking down the assay or system or problem into its components. Perfection doesn't exist and trying to be perfect is not only painfully disappointing it is an obstacle to accomplishment.

5. **Distinguish who you are from what you do.** You can spend every waking moment in service to the needs of others. Your family, patients, students, trainees. But you should not let work alone define you. You need to be healthy in mind, body, and spirit because your well-being is essential to your ability to contribute to the other groups. You must be the one to set boundaries and balance your needs and interests; short and long term goals. Every day may not be a perfect balance and there will be trade-offs.
6. Finally, use the **status quo as a jumping-off point, not the goal.** Don't be limited by what has gone before. Learn from examples but don't be limited by those examples because the circumstances that existed when we were coming up will not apply to your future. Science changes, medicine changes, technology changes, funding changes, society changes. Do not strive to do what has already been done but find your own voice and your own path and improve the system for those who come after you.

“Sooner or later we all discover that the important moments in life are not the advertised ones, not the birthdays, the graduations, the weddings, not the great goals achieved. The real milestones are less prepossessing. They come to the door of memory unannounced, stray dogs that amble in, sniff around a bit and simply never leave. Our lives are measured by these.”

Susan B. Anthony

In Memoriam

AWN Mourns the Passing of Dr. Margo Skinner

Dr. Margaret Walker Skinner, Ph.D., professor of otolaryngology, died Friday, Jan. 11, 2008 at Barnes-Jewish Hospital of respiratory failure due to idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. She was 72. Skinner, who was director of the Cochlear Implant and Hearing Rehabilitation Program had decided against a lung transplant a few years ago.

She was awarded the AWN "Pioneering Women" award at the AWN Spring dinner in 2007.

Skinner, known to friends and family as Margo, worked in audiology for more than four decades, earning an international reputation in auditory rehabilitation. Her research and insightful clinical skills culminated in the publication of a book considered the "bible" on hearing aids. She was a pioneer in the field of cochlear implants to help patients who do not benefit from hearing aids, and she served on the executive boards of state and national auditory societies and chaired international conferences in this area.

Skinner began her academic career at Washington University as a lecturer in the Department of Speech and Hearing in 1977, eventually becoming a professor in the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery in 1997. She became director of the Cochlear Implant and Hearing Rehabilitation Program in 1984.

She received many awards and honors including the Pioneer in Hearing Aids (1996), the Jerger Career Award in Hearing (2000) from the American Academy of Audiology, and the Carhart Memorial Lecturer (1998) from the American Auditory Society.



Dr. Skinner receiving the AWN "Pioneering Women" award at the AWN Spring dinner in 2007

Born in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 13, 1935, Skinner earned a degree in chemistry at Wellesley College in 1956. She earned a master's degree in audiology from Case Western Reserve University in 1960 and worked as an audiologist for almost two decades before earning her doctorate in audiology at Washington University in 1976. Skinner juggled being a homemaker and raising two boys with her clinical responsibilities as an audiologist. Although she did not complete her doctorate until she was in her 40s, her progress was rapid due to her legendary clinical expertise and her well-honed multi-tasking capabilities. A translational scientist before the term was coined, Skinner's intense fascination and passion for her work led many patients "back into the world of sound."

See also the AWN website:

<http://awn.wustl.edu/awntop/awnpics/skinner.pdf>

Memorial contributions can be made to the Cochlear Implant and Hearing Rehabilitation Program at Campus Box 1247.

Please Vote!

In upcoming weeks you will receive an email inviting you to vote for AWN board members and an amendment to AWN Constitution.

The AWN board has proposed that Postdoctoral and Medical Fellows at WUSM be allowed to join AWN as Associate Members. Associate members would take part in all AWN activities with the exception of service on the board and would pay dues of \$20. An email will be sent soon announcing the election.

AWN Spring Dinner

Tuesday, April 8, 6:00 p.m.

"Evidence Based Compassion"
Joan Cassell

Author of
"The Woman in the Surgeon's Body"

Location: King Center
(6th floor of the Bernard Becker Library).

You are encouraged to bring a colleague or a trainee along.

If you would like to attend, please send a check for \$35 per attendee, to Leesa Galatz, box 8233.



Academic Women's Network
At WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL of MEDICINE
Campus Box 8118
<http://awn.wustl.edu>