

AWNings

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

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2006-2007 AWN Board

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AWN Spring Dinner Focuses on Increasing the Visibility of Women in Science

The AWN Spring dinner was held on Tuesday April 10th at the King Center. Dr. Sandra K. Masur, Professor of Ophthalmology at The Mount Sinai School of Medicine in NYC, the guest lecturer, gave an excellent presentation on the visibility of women in science.

Dr. Masur's talk focused on four questions 1) Are there enough women scientists? 2) Why does being a successful woman scientist feel like an uphill battle? 3) How can scientific organizations help? 4) What has the Women in Cell Biology (WICB) Committee of the American Society of Cell Biology (ASCB) done in this regard?

First, Dr. Masur showed data demonstrating that more than enough women are being trained, but that they are being lost at every rung of the academic ladder. A "leaky pipeline" problem. Second, she presented studies that illustrate the inherent gender biases that women experience, making success seem like an uphill battle. Next, Dr. Masur showed data illustrating the impact that focused leaders can have on increasing the visibility of women in science. She reported that Dr. John Stobo, Chairman of Medicine at Johns Hopkins, raised the number of female associate professors at his institution from 6 in 1990 to 26 in 1995! Finally, she lauded the many programs that the WICB has instituted to initiate change within the ASCB. These include awards for junior and senior women as well as seminars and roundtable lunches on career development. A reference list of faculty resources that Dr. Masur provided is available on the AWN website under "Resources".

The lecture was an excellent illustration of the problems currently facing women in science along with potential solutions that Universities and organizations can both embrace.

From the President's Desk

by Ann M. Gronowski, Ph.D.

*M*y year as president has come to a close and I hope you will indulge an outgoing president a little artistic license to illustrate for you what AWN and being AWN president has meant to me.

Since I like to run, I liken our careers to running a marathon. At first we all start out unencumbered and full of energy. Slowly we take on additional responsibilities that we carry with us. Perhaps you undertake a book chapter, so you are now running the marathon carrying a big text book. Then you agree to teach a whole course, now you are running with a giant suitcase like the big ones you might take on an extended vacation. Then you become secretary, or treasurer, or president, of an organization and you are running with a big sack filled with stuff dragging behind you. You are passionate about each of these things, and each one alone does not weigh much, but together they get heavy and can be a lot to carry while running a marathon. Some of us run while we are pregnant. When our babies are born we run carrying them in little car seats. Then we run pushing a stroller. My boys are six now, so they can walk and even run next to me. But sometimes they get sick or have snow days and I have to carry them. In the summer, I pick them up, and put them down, and pick them up, and put them down. Phew that's a lot of work! It's OK though. They are not heavy, because I love them.

Ten years ago, when I found the AWN it was like a light turned on. Suddenly I learned that I had been running this marathon in the dark! Now I looked around and there were all these other women running the marathon with me. Some were carrying giant loads, some were carrying tiny loads. Some were carrying patients. Some were even carrying a parent or a husband. Wow! These were strong women. Now I had someone to talk to. During the 10 years I have been following the AWN "light" these women have been there for me. Sometimes we stop for dinner and I can talk about my load. These women have taught me how to shift my load to make it easier to carry and in some cases they have shown me how to get someone else to carry part of my load for me! Other times I have gotten lost and these women have guided me back to the race course. Some of these women have collaborated with me on projects, or helped me mentor someone and at those times, we ran together holding hands. When I was pregnant, and when I got tennis elbow from too much laundry, some of these women were even my doctor!!



AWN provides a great illuminating light to so many women at Washington University. However someone has to carry that bright light and keep it lit. It is a "torch", if you will. When it was my turn I thought I could not carry one more thing. But just like everything else, I did. Carrying the torch means that your arm gets tired and sometimes it even spills a little oil and burns you, it's hot and it's extra work. But you are not alone. The women of the AWN board are there helping to hold the torch with you. Sometimes they even carry it for a while so you can rest. Rarely, the light gets a little dim and almost goes out. That's when all the women in AWN gather around. They bring oil and matches and help us all hold and protect the flame. For years, **Karen O'Malley** has been running right behind the AWN President with a map, helping to guide. Her map seems to show all the potholes and curbs and places to trip. She continuously coaches with words of encouragement and warning when a big hurdle is coming. For this I am very grateful.

My year carrying this torch is over. It has been an absolutely great experience. I have met so many new people. I now pass the torch to **Ingrid Borecki**. She has her own luggage, and big sacks, and people to carry, but she takes on this one additional commitment. I will join the other women of AWN circled around her to help keep this wonderful light illuminated.

If AWN has provided light for you, I urge you to get involved in the AWN board. We all carry heavy loads. But we need the AWN to help each other to succeed and to make Washington University a better place.

Thank you most sincerely for the opportunity to serve you as AWN president (and for indulging me with this analogy). It has been an honor and a pleasure.

AWN Mentor Awards



Dr. David Beebe (left) and Dr. Scott Hultgren (right).

The *Academic Women's Network Mentor Award* was established in 2000. This award recognizes an individual who has served as an outstanding mentor to a female Washington University faculty member or trainee. The award is meant to be distinct from a teaching award in that nominees should mentor in every sense of the word, not simply through teaching responsibilities.

This year, because we received so many outstanding nominations, the board was unable to choose a single awardee and instead selected two. These awards were bestowed at the Annual AWN Spring Dinner, Tuesday April 10th.

Dr. David Beebe, J & B Becker Professor of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences, received his PhD from the Department of Biology at the University of Virginia and did postdoctoral work in the Child Health Institute at the NIH. He served as chair of the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, MD before moving to WU just less than 12 years ago. Dr Beebe's laboratory studies the role of growth factors in eye development, primarily using conditional gene knockouts in the mouse.

Dr. Scott Hultgren, Helen L. Stoeber Professor of Molecular Microbiology, received his PhD at Northwestern University in Chicago and did his postdoctoral training at Umeå University in Sweden. His major interests have been in elucidating basic mechanisms of bacterial pathogenesis. He was recently selected as Coursemaster-of-the-Year at Washington University in honor of his dedication to teaching.

AWN Service Award



Last year, the AWN initiated a new award entitled the AWN Service award. This Award recognizes women who have worked to advance the objectives of the Academic Women's Network and advance the professional status of women at Washington University School of Medicine. Last year this award was given to Dr. Karen O'Malley.

This year, the award was given **Diana Gray, M.D.**, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs. Dr. Gray has worked tirelessly to advance the professional status of women at Washington University. She has been a member of AWN for over 10 years serving as President 1999-2000. She has served on the Maternity Leave and Child Care Committee; the Mentoring and Social Interactions Committee; Dean's Committee to Develop a Strategic Plan to Enhance the Representation and Professional Advancement of Women on the Faculty; Gender Pay Equity Committee; and the Gender Equity Committee. She spearheaded the WU "tenure stop" document, and she undertook a huge study on the childcare needs Washington University. She was instrumental in the increase in the number of endowed professorships for women at Washington University, and was a motivator of the external pay-equity study commissioned by the Faculty Senate Council. The AWN is deeply grateful for her outstanding service.

This award was bestowed at the Annual AWN Spring Dinner, Tuesday April 10th. See the AWN website <http://awn.wustl.edu> for photos of the dinner.

2007 AWN Pioneering Woman Award

Dr. Margaret Walker Skinner

By Karen O'Malley

Margaret Walker Skinner was born in Washington, D.C. on February 13, 1935. Inspired by a high school teacher, she majored in chemistry at Wellesley College graduating 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 from Washington University in St. Louis in 1976.

For over four decades, Skinner has worked in the field of audiology 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. Since the mid '80's she has been a pioneer in the field of cochlear implants to help patients that do not benefit from hearing aids. She has 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. She became an Assistant Professor in 1979 in the Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery, an Associate in 1992, and Professor in 1997. She has been the Director of the Cochlear Implant and Hearing Rehabilitation Program in the Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery from 1984 to the present.

Skinner is the recipient of 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.



"Intense fascination and passion for her work."

Growing up in a world in which most women became wives and mothers, Skinner juggled being a homemaker and raising two boys with her clinical responsibilities as an audiologist. Although she did not complete her Ph.D. until her 40's, 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 has led many patients "back into the world of sound". Noted for her integrative teamwork approach and problem solving skills, colleagues commend her vision, leadership and momentum.

Skinner advises young scientists to develop goals for themselves based on an in depth assessment of their unique talents, capabilities, temperament, and interests. She suggests that the "optimal/life balance requires self-attunement and nurturing so that one can be the most creative".

AWN Board meetings will begin again in Fall 2007. Everyone is welcome to attend. Watch AWNings for time and location.

Visit <http://awn.wustl.edu> to see our new updated AWN website.

"Good works go forward in proportion to the number of vital and creative and determined women supporting them. When women get behind a project things happen."

Lady Bird Johnson

Focus on Female Faculty

“Focus on Female Faculty” is a new column that will run 1-2 times per year in AWNings and will highlight portions of interviews with senior WUSM female faculty. Thank you to Dr. Kelle Moley for her willingness to serve as our first “Focus”.

Kelle Moley, M.D., is Professor and Vice Chair of Basic Science, Division Director of Basic Science Research in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Describe what you do and the different hats that you wear.

This is hard one, I guess I would say 80% of the time I am a physician scientist. I run a research lab and I spend the majority of my time wearing that hat. Secondly, I am also a clinician in our reproductive endocrinology offices one day a week and in that capacity I am also the fellowship director, that is the fellowship of reproductive endocrinology and infertility. Then my other time is spent administratively as the Vice Chair of OB/GYN Basic Science. In this title, I meet with our business manager to talk about the budget for this division, about maintenance of common equipment that the department is responsible for, and development of junior faculty.

Briefly, tell about your educational and career background.

I obtained my BA from Wellesley College in Wellesley, MA in 1984. I then went to Yale Medical School in New Haven, CT. Next, I moved to St. Louis, where I was a resident in OB/GYN at Washington University/Barnes Hospital. Then I did a fellowship in reproductive endocrinology and infertility also here at Washington University. I did a postdoc, in the lab of Dr. Oliver Lowry and then I continued my fellowship in Dr. Mike Mueckler's lab. That fellowship continued once I finished my clinical fellowship and I was in Mike Mueckler's lab from 1994-1998. During that time I had no clinical duties. When I came back to the department of OB/GYN in 1998 I started seeing patients again and I had my own lab in 1998 in Maternity Hospital.

How did you choose your career?

During college, I worked during the summers at a research laboratory at Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, which is where my father worked. My mentor and role model at that time was a woman named Dr. Nancy Hutson. She was inspirational, incredibly enthusiastic about our science, and a very outspoken woman. Her interests were in diabetes and the cell biology of diabetes. This is what got me interested in wanting to be a scientist. My father is also a chemist and he recommended that I think about medical school as a career, as well as doing science. In college, I majored in molecular biology and I did my thesis work in organic chemistry, making novel nucleoside compounds. I liked the science of chemistry, but I didn't think that I wanted to become a chemist. I chose medicine for what may sound like a corny reason, but I really wanted to help people.

What do you think has contributed most to your success?

Our former chairman, Jim Schreiber, was a great supporter of mine. When he came to Washington University in 1991, I told him that I wanted to be a physician scientist and he supported me 100% over the next 9 years. He supported me for the RSDP, which was the NIH grant that I got to do my postdoc work. He also gave me 100% protected time by extending the time I was an instructor. For me, this was a good move as it kept me out of the ticking tenure clock. It also kept me out of clinical duties and I think, that contributed to my success.

I also have a great husband who supports me. He was also trying to make it as a physician scientist, which sometimes made it harder, but also contributed a lot to keeping me on track and being a role model for me. I think another big factor has been my full time nanny, Molly McDaniel, who has been with us since my oldest son, now 15, was a toddler. She comes to our home every day, watches the kids, drives them to all their lessons and disciplines them better than I do. I have three sons (ages 15, 13 and 9). It was a big relief to know when I left in the mornings I didn't have to worry because she loves and cares for them like they are her own. This makes it much easier to concentrate at work.

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How would you recommend achieving an optimal work/life balance?

It is hard to make a recommendation to do this without telling what I did. Early in my career, I brought my kids to work with me if I needed to on the weekends. I really combined a lot of what I did at work with what I was doing with my kids. They got to know me as the mouse doctor and would come and play in the lab while I did some work. As they have gotten older and I have gotten further along, I don't bring them as much, but I certainly do a lot of my work at home at night and they understand that. They know that I have homework just like they have homework, and so that is one way I balance. In times when I know that I have a bunch of grants to review, or grants to write, I will put copies in the car. Then when I am driving the kids around on the weekends I can read grants while I am waiting for them. I think the key is using every spare minute to try to catch up. I know that sounds boring, but I can't really separate my work life from my family life because first of all, that wouldn't be realistic and second of all, I wouldn't be as efficient. I think that is the key to success, if you can multitask and do both at the same time.

What do you see as the challenges facing young women scientists and physicians today?

I think the rapidly dropping NIH budget is a big problem. I think the challenge is not to be too depressed about that. The research will go on. We might have to seek new sources of funding from non-government organizations. Industry might have to play a bigger role. International science may become a bigger part of what we do. I think women physicians are in a better place than they've ever been. We now make up more than half the physician population. I think the key is to choose the career or field that you enjoy and are passionate about. Not one that will fit into the lifestyle you might want. I see a lot of students and medical students thinking "Oh, I don't think I could do OB/GYN, it's so demanding." When, in fact, you can fashion your career the way you want and it doesn't mean you have to work harder at OB than you would at something else. I think you should do what you enjoy doing if it's something you're going to be doing for a long time. If you're not passionate about it, it will get old fast.



Kelle Moley and her husband, Jeff and boys, John, Charlie, and Patrick.

What specific goals would you recommend that young female scientists set for themselves?

Young female scientists are starting to outnumber the males. I think it's important to set deadlines with goals for things like a thesis proposal or thesis project. Then, on a 2, 3, or 6 month basis make sure that you're reaching those goals. I think you have to be proactive; you need to go to your mentor and develop a personal relationship with them. It may not be on a daily basis, but at least once a week. I think as a post doc, the same thing applies. It's a little bit different because I think in some ways you need to see the big picture: what future job you might like to have, what area you might like, specifically what techniques and tools you need to get there. Your mentor can help you and I think you need to communicate with him or her and let them know what you're thinking. Also, set a timeline for either papers or grants or proposals that you want and how you're going to do that over a 3-5 year course. As a junior faculty, I think you should start off thinking about 10 year expectations and really plan your career based on what your department supervisor/division director expects. All departments should be the same, but I think it's important to sit down with your division chair or your chairman and go over what they expect from you. For me it's important to write this list of things down and pin it up somewhere so that you can check through it once or twice a month to make sure you're making all the strides that you should be.

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What are some of the most rewarding moments of your career?

I guess the most rewarding moments of my career have been securing my RO1's as early as I did in my career. I got the first one in 1999 and the second in 2001. I think this probably was one of the big factors that contributed to my success. Once I got promoted to Assistant Professor in 1999, I moved pretty quickly up the ladder-Associate Professor in 2003 and Full Professor in 2006. Also, when our new chairman, Dr. George Macones started and told me at one of our first meetings with him that I was one of the most important members of the department and that I was better known outside of my own institution than I was within the institution, that made me feel pretty confident. He promptly supported my promotion to full Professor and made me Vice Chair of Basic Science Research. This was very rewarding.

What have been the most rewarding moments of your life, not career?

I think for me, the important thing is that you do remember that your family comes first. That there are times when things might not be going so well in your career but it's your kids and your husband and your family time that's important. And I think one of the most rewarding moments of my life has been when my 15 year old son won the state hockey championship this year. It kind of brought everything full circle, made me realize why I spent those 10 years driving him to hockey practices and hockey games for an experience, which for him, might be one of the greatest experiences of his life. I was able to help him get to that point. I think you have to remember that throughout your life those things that are rewarding to you are not necessarily personal achievements but achievements of your students, of your post docs, of your children, and of your husband. It's not all about us, but about the changes we've made in other people's lives.

Kudos

Linda B. Cottler, PhD, MPH, professor of Epidemiology In Psychiatry, was elected president of the American Psychopathological Association (APPA) for 2010. APPA is devoted to the scientific investigation of disordered human behavior, and its biological and psychosocial substrates. Dr. Cottler will be only the 10th woman elected to this prestigious office in its 100 years.

Diane Damiano, Ph.D., research associate professor of neurology, has received a one-year, \$25,000 grant from the American Academy for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine for research titled "Evaluating Outcomes Associated with Multidisciplinary Care for Children with Cerebral Palsy Using Clinical Practice Improvement (CPI) Methodology."

Tatiana Efimova, Ph.D., research assistant professor of dermatology, has received a one-year, \$15,000 grant from the American Skin Association for research titled "Role of p388 MAPK in Skin Carcinogenesis."

Leesa M. Galatz, M.D., assistant professor of orthopaedic surgery, has received a one-year, \$20,000 grant from the American Shoulder and Elbow Surgeons for research titled "The Role of Stress Environment on Formation of Tendon-Bone Insertion."

Ann M. Gronowski, Ph.D., associate professor of Pathology & Immunology and Obstetrics & Gynecology has received a \$5000 grant from the Van Slyke Foundation for research titled "The Ability of Qualitative Urine hCG Devices to Detect Various Isoforms of hCG During Early Pregnancy".

Dr. Diane Merritt, M.D. Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology has been elected President-elect of the North American Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology (NASPAG). The mission of the NASPAG is to provide a forum for education, research and communication among health professionals who provide gynecologic care to children and adolescents.

Linda Van Dillen, Ph.D., assistant professor of physical therapy, has received a four-year, \$1,438,316 grant from the National Institutes of Health-National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research for research titled "Classification-directed Treatment of Low Back Pain."

Do you have a topic for AWNings?

Send ideas to: Ann M. Gronowski;

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