

# People

## Two pioneers in neural research honoured

Corey S. Goodman and Thomas M. Jessell have both been awarded the March of Dimes Prize for their contributions to the understanding of the development and function of the CNS. Goodman is currently Evan Rauch Professor of Neuroscience and Director of the Wills Neuroscience Institute at the University of California, Berkeley (CA, USA) and Jessell is currently Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics at Columbia University (New York, NY, USA) and both are Howard Hughes Medical Investigators.

Goodman's research has focused mainly on the molecular level of the development of the CNS. This has included the identification of several key genes that control axon growth in both animals and in humans. Jessell has focused his research more on discovering the key genes involved in embryonic nerve cell and glial cell development in both animals and humans.

Jennifer L. Howse, President of the March of Dimes said: 'These two imaginative scientists have helped to shape the present and future directions of an entire field of neural research. The result is that we now have opportunities to develop new types of gene-based drugs or other therapies for neural tube birth defects such as spina bifida and anencephaly, and neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and motor neuron diseases.'

The March of Dimes prize is awarded annually to investigators that have contributed profoundly to the understanding of birth defects and was created as a tribute to Jonas Salk in 1995.

## Stewart Parker receives Entrepreneurial Achievement Award

H. Stewart Parker, President and CEO of Targeted Genetics Corporation (Seattle, WA, USA) has been awarded the Entrepreneurial Achievement Award from the Forum for Women Entrepreneurs (FWE). This award is presented for not only making significant contributions to an emerging hi-tech or life science company but also for offering time and wisdom to her community and other entrepreneurs.

The FWE was founded in 1993 and aims to accelerate women's opportunities to start, build, manage and invest in market-leading companies.

Sharelle Klaus, President of the FWE in Seattle said: 'Stewart Parker has overcome several challenges to build a company on the cutting edge of life sciences research and development. Ms Parker has earned national recognition as a leader in the biotechnology industry and the field of genetic therapies.'

## Dale Schenk receives Potamkin Prize

Dale Schenk, the researcher who developed a vaccine for Alzheimer's disease, was awarded this year's Potamkin Prize at the American Academy of Neurology's annual meeting in Philadelphia (PA, USA). The US\$100,000 prize is in its 14th year and is awarded to those that have made a significant contribution to the prevention or treatment of Pick's, Alzheimer's and related diseases.

Schenk is currently Senior Vice-President of Discovery Research at Elan Corporation (San Francisco, CA, USA). Using a transgenic mouse model of Alzheimer's disease, Schenk showed that immunizing mice with the amyloid protein seen in the plaques of Alzheimer's disease not only prevented the deposition of further amyloid, but actually reversed it. The vaccine is now in clinical trials. Roger Rosenberg, a former president of the American Academy of Neurology, is optimistic but remains cautious: 'The transgenic mouse model approximates but does not exactly mirror what occurs in humans. Dr Schenk's research is an incentive and a catalyst to develop possible vaccination therapy for Alzheimer's disease and has a good chance on theoretical grounds to be effective in patients.'

## Diagnostic pioneer honoured

Raymond Damadian, the pioneer of magnetic resonance scanning technology, has received the 7th annual Lemelson-MIT Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to diagnostic medicine. This MRI scanning technology is used as a non-invasive diagnostic tool for the early detection of cancers and other diseases

and was first used in humans by Damadian in 1977 following a successful patent application in 1972.

It was in 1971 that Damadian first discovered that the decay rate of MR signals of soft tissues was different to that of cancerous tissues and, therefore, overcame the lack of a contrast seen using X-rays. Damadian now oversees his New York based company, FONAR Corporation, which researches, develops, manufactures and sells MRI scanners. This year's presentation of the award was held in conjunction with 'Nobel Week', a series of programmes honouring the centennial of the Nobel prizes, hosted by Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

## Two key appointments at Berlex

Berlex (Montville, NJ, USA), a US affiliate of Schering AG Germany, has appointed Alice Leung to the position of Vice-President and General Manager of the Berlex oncology business unit and Ralph Makar as Vice-President of Marketing of the Berlex therapeutic business unit. Leung joins the company from Bristol-Myers Squibb where she was Vice-President, Worldwide Licensing and External Development. Her expertise from managing the growth of some of the key oncology treatments should help in her new role of designing the strategies and leading the implementation to expand the prospects for the oncology portfolio of Berlex. Meanwhile, Makar, previously Senior Director of the US cardiovascular disease team at Parke-Davis, Division of Warner Lambert, has been recruited to provide marketing vision and strategic focus for the company.

## New Head of Business Development at Avidex

Avidex (Oxford, UK), which specializes in the development of T cell-based therapeutics, has appointed Hugh Penfold as their new Head of Business Development. Penfold joins Avidex from Celltech where he has held the post of Head of Licensing following the merger with Medeva. Before that, he was manager of business development in Eastern Europe at the CIS at Amersham International and has previously worked at Celltech and the British Biotechnology Group.