
PREFACE

Serotonin's 50th Anniversary Symposium

Serotonin is 50 years old! Well, not really. Serotonin is actually one of the oldest biologically active compounds on earth, found in a variety of primitive plants and animals. However, 1998 is the 50th anniversary of the initial steps in the isolation, structural identification, and synthesis of serotonin by Rapport, Green, and Page. Thus, it seemed appropriate and proper to mark the occasion with a celebration. Accordingly, a two-day meeting was held on the campus of Princeton University on September 25 and 26, 1998.

The meeting consisted of 16 oral presentations and approximately 70 poster presentations. There were lunches and dinners for the speakers and special guests. In addition, a delicious chocolate birthday cake in the shape of an indole nucleus was served to the 200 people who registered for the meeting.

Two very special guests were invited to the meeting. Maurice Rapport, now living on Long Island, was the first author of the original *Science* paper in 1948 announcing the isolation and partial purification of serotonin, and proposing that the molecule be called "serotonin." Betty Twarog, now living in Maine, published the first report in 1953 of the localization of serotonin in the brain. (See the article by Dr. Whitaker-Azmitia for a fuller description of their contributions.)

Due to space and time constraints, it was decided to limit the subject of the symposium to serotonin's role in the mammalian central nervous system. The speakers came from Europe (actually France) and from the United States and Canada. Most of the speakers had long-standing, excellent reputations in the field of serotonin research, but a few were relative newcomers to the field. Their experimental approaches ranged from the traditional to the cutting edge, and the subject matter of their presentations ranged from the cellular and molecular to the clinical.

The meeting was supported by the Langfeld Fund from the Psychology Department at Princeton University, and it was sponsored by the Serotonin Club. Ms. Marion Kowalewski and Paul Bree provided excellent technical support for various aspects of the meeting, and Dr. Casimir Fornal did a great job in organizing the poster sessions.

I think it is fair to say that "A good time was had by all."

See you at the diamond anniversary celebration in 2023!

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