

2004 ASHG AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN HUMAN GENETICS EDUCATION Introductory Speech for Robert J. Gorlin*

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It is a great honor to introduce Bob Gorlin for the American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) Award for Excellence in Human Genetics Education. Bob has a long and complex history, starting with working his way through college at Columbia College in New York City, serving in the army during World War II, dental school

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at Washington University, fellowships at NIH and Columbia, a Master's degree from Iowa, and then settling at the University of Minnesota almost 50 years ago.

He has been a member of ASHG since 1960 (before many of today's members were born), served on the board of directors in the '80s, and has been an invited speaker and presenter at our meetings many, many times. He has many influences, many admirers, many honorary degrees, and many memberships. In human genetics, we think Bob belongs to us, but the dentists, the pathologists, the dermatologists, the oncologists, the reconstructive surgeons, and the craniofacial specialists all think he belongs to them, too.

His educational influence in all these areas has been enormous. He has taught more than 20 postdoctoral fellows. Over the years, he has contributed through articles (more than 600 publications), books (19 volumes—many written for parents), lectures, movies, editorial boards, consultations, presentations, and conferences, but particularly through the fabulous *Syndromes of the Head and Neck*, now in the 4th but working on the 5th edition.

It is not surprising that the name Gorlin has become well known for many reasons, from “the Gorlin sign” and “Gorlin syndrome,” through his enormous generosity of spirit in sharing information about weird and wonderful cases, to his encyclopedic memory. His wife, Marilyn, a staunch supporter, reminds us he has been an author on three papers in *Nature Genetics* since his 80th birthday.

Anyone who comes to know Bob realizes that his hobby of stamp collecting reflects his life of curiosity and organizing abstruse facts using his amazingly eclectic mind. I remember, for instance, a lecture Bob gave on the cultural diversity of tattoos, which was both artistic and illuminating.

Bob's contributions and honors are legion and beyond the scope of a brief introduction; however, his dedication to sharing knowledge, his unique style, and his genuine love of living and of people are a model to us all.

It is with great pleasure I introduce to you a person who has truly contributed to the education of us all.