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## **MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG HOSTS RECEPTION TO ANNOUNCE WINNERS OF EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AWARDS**

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg tonight announced the winners of the Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Science and Technology at a reception held at the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens. The annual awards ceremony recognizes the invaluable contributions that members of the science and technology communities make to New York City. Joining the Mayor for the presentation were Kate D. Levin, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; Ellis Rubinstein, the CEO of the New York Academy of Sciences; Judith Zuk, President of the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens; Bill Rudin, President of Rudin Management Company Inc; and Andrew Alper, the President of the Economic Development Corporation.

"It is my honor to congratulate the recipients of the annual Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Science and Technology," said Mayor Bloomberg. "These men and women represent some of the finest scientific minds of our City and our nation. Thanks to their work, many lives have been changed for the better. Today, New Yorkers are known worldwide as pioneers in research and discovery."

"New York City is fertile ground for world-class science in part because so many of our cultural institutions are committed to making the excitement of scientific inquiry accessible to everyone," said Commissioner Levin. "We have an incredible community of individuals who are not only practicing science, but also figuring out how to share it with the world."

"These Awards are emblematic of New York's leadership in science and medicine," said New York Academy of Sciences CEO Ellis Rubinstein. "No city has more outstanding research talent than New York and this is reflected in the diversity of this year's award recipients. It is particularly heartening to see how many awards went to young people. This shows the exceptional quality of nominations in that category."

Each year, the New York Academy of Sciences administers the nomination, evaluation, and review process for the awards, in close partnership with the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. This year, Dr. Dominick Purpura, Dr. Ronald Breslow, Dr. George Schillinger and Dr. Alan Friedman directed the Academy's review panels of 20 experts.

Nominations are received through a comprehensive process that includes outreach to all sectors in the City's scientific communities. Individuals may be nominated for either a special achievement or a lifetime body of work in the five awards categories: Technology, Biological/Medical Sciences and Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences, Public Understanding of Science and Technology, and Young Investigator. Candidates must live or work in New York City. The Mayor chooses winners from a list of finalists submitted by the NYAS. This year's winners of the Mayor's Awards are:

### **Biological and Medical Sciences**

#### ***Matthew D. Scharff, professor of Cell Biology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine***

Educated at Brown University and New York University College of Medicine, Dr. Scharff was responsible for developing the technologies that made possible the generation of monoclonal antibodies that are used in diagnostics, in cancer therapy and hold promise for biodefense. He continues to make extraordinary contributions in the field of immunology. He has been recognized as an outstanding mentor by the American Association of Immunologists and the University of Chicago and has trained a number of the leaders in the field. Dr. Scharff has been with the Albert Einstein College of Medicine for more than 40 years, and has served on a number of advisory boards with the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the American Chemical Society, and the National Cancer Institute. He is also a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

### **Mathematical, Physical, and Engineering Sciences**

#### ***Samuel J. Danishefsky, Chair and Director of the Laboratory for Bioorganic Chemistry at the Sloan-Kettering Institute, at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center***

Dr. Danishefsky has been a leader in the field of bioorganic chemistry, and had the very important role of bridging the fields of chemistry, biochemistry, and medicinal chemistry. Over nearly 40 years, Dr. Danishefsky and colleagues played a central role in new techniques for organic synthesis. His scientific insight and intellectual creativity have advanced our capabilities to the point that we can now assemble remarkably complex substances in scales suitable for extensive biological evaluation. These advances in the laboratory have translated directly into clinical trials to test new anti-cancer agents, fully synthetic vaccines against cancer and AIDS, and the development of first and second generation epothilones for clinical trials. He has also made breakthroughs in finding solutions to the problem of multi-drug resistance.

### **Public Understanding of Science and Technology**

#### ***Samuel C. Silverstein, John C. Dalton Professor of Physiology at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University.***

Dr. Silverstein is the founder and director of Columbia University's Summer Research Program for Science Teachers. He founded the program in 1990 out of a concern that too few Americans were entering careers in science. The program provides fellowships for New York City middle and high school science teachers to participate in laboratory research under the mentorship of Columbia University faculty. It also provides participating teachers with funds to purchase supplies and equipment for their classrooms and laboratories so they can bring the knowledge and technical skills they acquired at Columbia to their students and classes. Dr. Silverstein has served on committees with the National Institutes of Health, American Heart Association, Albert Einstein

College of Medicine, Harvard University, and the New York Blood Center. He is a past President of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology and a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences.

### **Technology**

***Henning Schulzrinne, Associate Professor of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering at Columbia University.***

Dr. Schulzrinne is heavily involved in the areas of Internet real-time and multimedia services and protocols, mobile systems, modeling and analysis of computer-communication networks, and network security. He has been a driving force behind the technical development and market acceptance, both nationally and globally, of Voice over Internet Protocol, a technology for transmitting ordinary telephone calls over the Internet. In 1998, Dr. Schulzrinne's research in the ability to support real-time voice services over the Internet culminated with his development of the Session Initiation Protocol, a signaling protocol for Internet conferencing, telephony, events notification and instant messaging. His work was recognized internationally through his receipt of the 2000 Voice Over Network Pioneer Award.

### **Young Investigator (4 awardees):**

***Terry Gaasterland, Associate Professor and head of The Laboratory of Computational Genomics at The Rockefeller University***

Dr. Gaasterland received her Ph.D. from the University of Maryland and is a pioneer in the field of Comparative Genomics. She established the Laboratory of Computational Genomics at Rockefeller University and co-founded the bioinformatics company Iobion, which recently agreed to create a central New York City database of gene expression data. Dr. Gaasterland has acted as a leader in promoting collaborations between experimental and computational scientists and has authored first of a kind software systems for interpreting genomic sequencing efforts. She has been a recipient of numerous awards including the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, the U.S. government's most prestigious honor for young investigators.

***Christopher Lima, Associate Professor of Biochemistry at Weill Medical College of Cornell University.***

Dr. Lima received his Ph.D. in molecular and cell biology at Northwestern University, and is a leader in structural characterization and discovery of enzymes involved in nucleic acid metabolism. He is also a founder of "structural genomics," a new field in which macromolecular structure is used to characterize proteins of unknown function. More recently, he has characterized a family of proteins involved in SUMO protein modification, a reversible process that modulates protein function either through changes in protein localization or activation, or through protection from degradation. Dr. Lima's research targets pathways and cellular processes where this type of information aims to benefit the development of drug design targets against human disease and microbial pathogens. In addition to this honor, Dr. Lima has been granted a Young Investigator's Award from the Arnold and Mable Beckman Foundation, and was recently selected as a Rita Allen Scholar.

***Thomas Tuschl, Associate Professor and head of Laboratory of RNA Molecular Biology at The Rockefeller University***

Dr. Tuschl received his Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of Regensburg, pursuing research at the Max-Planck Institute for Experimental Medicine in Germany and was a post-doctoral fellow at MIT. He recently joined The Rockefeller University. Dr. Tuschl has made major discoveries of novel mechanisms for regulating gene expression by small interfering RNAs (siRNA) and microRNAs. These findings have revealed fundamental ways in which gene expression is regulated. Dr. Tuschl's goal is to apply this knowledge to develop a new generation of gene-specific therapeutic reagents.

***Hao Wu, Professor of Biochemistry at Weill Medical College of Cornell University***

Dr. Wu received her Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Purdue University and has made pioneering discoveries in the application of structural biology to elucidate cellular mechanisms controlling cell proliferation and death. She has solved important structures that show how molecules can assemble in cells to regulate these essential processes. These studies are relevant to the understanding of major diseases, including cancer and inflammation-related disorders. Dr. Wu was selected by the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences for an award in 2000, and recently received an award from the Rita Allen Foundation Scholarship Program--two prestigious awards for young faculty members.

Tonight's event was made possible by the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, the New York Academy of Sciences, New York Information and Technology@55 Broad Street, The Palm House and the Rudin Family.

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