The Genetics Society of America Announces Its 2010 Award Recipients

Bethesda, MD (January 28, 2010) – The Genetics Society of America (GSA) is pleased to announce the recipients of its five awards for distinguished service to the field of genetics. These awards represent sustained activity and contributions by members of the genetics community. The individuals who receive these awards were nominated and selected by their peers in recognition of the exceptional value of their work to promote further understanding within the field of genetics.

“The Genetics Society of America awards shine a spotlight on the scientific achievements and contributions of our members. This year’s awards illustrate the power of basic research on nonhuman organisms as a pathway to understanding human biology, health, and disease,” said Sherry A. Marts, GSA Executive Director.

The recipients of these awards represent several of the model organism research communities within GSA including Saccharomyces cerevisae (yeast), Drosophila (fruit fly), and C. elegans (the roundworm). The awards and their recipients are listed below:

- **Recipient:** Alexander Tzagoloff, Ph.D., Columbia University.
  Award: **Thomas Hunt Morgan Medal** for lifetime contributions in the field of genetics.

  Using yeast as a model system, Dr. Tzagoloff has defined the biogenesis and function of the mitochondrial respiratory chain. He was the first to systematically define the nearly 400 nuclear (PET) genes required for respiration in yeast. His work has not only influenced yeast researchers, but has also affected research in human disease, apoptosis and cancer genetics. Through the years he has developed an extensive collection of yeast strains, which he has generously shared with colleagues worldwide.

- **Recipient:** Thomas Cline, Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley.
  Award: **Edward Novitski Prize** for exhibiting an extraordinary level of creativity and intellectual ingenuity in solving a significant problem in genetics.

  Dr. Cline studies sex determination in the fruit fly, Drosophila melanogaster, and has demonstrated that Sex-lethal (Sxl) is the master regulatory switch for sex determination and dosage compensation, exerting its control through interactions with RNA. These important discoveries in the fields of sex determination and developmental genetics led to an important revision of Calvin Bridges’ model of sex determination. Dr. Cline is a previous recipient of the NAS Award in Molecular Biology.

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Recipient: **Barbara J. Meyer**, Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley.

Award: **Genetics Society of America Medal** for outstanding contributions to the field of genetics in the last 15 years.

Over decades of research, Dr. Meyer has relentlessly and patiently pursued complex problems to their resolution. She studies sex determination in the roundworm, *Caenorhabditis elegans*, to determine fundamental principles in developmental biology, including the regulation of meiosis and X-chromosome dosage compensation. In addition to being an HHMI investigator, Dr. Meyer is a member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Academy of Microbiology, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.


Award: **George W. Beadle Award** for outstanding contributions to the community of genetics researchers.

For the past two decades, Dr. Gelbart has devoted himself to creating and maintaining FlyBase, the central digital repository that enables the world-wide Drosophila community to connect genetic and molecular data with the Drosophila genome sequence. FlyBase is the model for other model organism databases and Dr. Gelbart also serves on the Scientific Advisory Boards of WormBase, ZFIN, TAIR and GRIN, the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) Large-Scale Genome Sequencing Network Advisory Committee, and the NHGRI National Advisory Council. He is Chair of the NHGRI Coordinating Committee for Selection of Large-Scale Sequencing Projects, and a Director of Genome Canada. In addition to his database work, Dr. Gelbart is a developmental geneticist interested in understanding the molecular basis of pattern formation in higher order animals.

Recipient: **Utpal Banerjee**, Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles.

Award: **Elizabeth W. Jones Award for Excellence in Education** in recognition of a significant and sustained impact on genetics education.

A dedicated and award-winning educator of both undergraduate and graduate students, Dr. Banerjee has designed large-scale genomics projects involving hundreds of undergraduates in research. These research-based courses have resulted in the publication of findings with dozens of students as contributing authors – many of whom developed an interest in exploratory science as a career. In 2000, UCLA named Dr. Banerjee as one of the “Best 20 Professors” of the “Bruin Century.” He is also a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and an HHMI professor.

For more information about each award and for a list of past recipients, please visit the GSA Awards page at [http://www.genetics-gsa.org/pages/awards.shtml](http://www.genetics-gsa.org/pages/awards.shtml).

**ABOUT THE GENETICS SOCIETY OF AMERICA**

Founded in 1931, the Genetics Society of America (GSA) is the professional membership organization for geneticists and science educators. Its more than 4,000 members work to advance knowledge in the basic mechanisms of inheritance, from the molecular to the population level. The GSA is dedicated to promoting research in genetics and to facilitating communication among geneticists worldwide through The Genetics Society of America Conferences including the biennial conference on Model Organisms to Human Biology, an interdisciplinary meeting on current and cutting edge topics in genetics research, and annual and biennial meetings that focus on the genetics of particular organisms. GSA publishes *GENETICS*, the leading journal in the field. For more information about GSA, please visit [www.genetics-gsa.org](http://www.genetics-gsa.org).