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Catecholamine Club

# Chronicle

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## 2007 Club Dinner and Axelrod Award

The Club's 2007 dinner was held on the 30th of April in conjunction with Experimental Biology 2007 in Washington DC at Zola. This restaurant, associated with the International Spy Museum, turned out to be a terrific venue attracting a strong following of club members. Included amongst the cast was Charles (Chip) Rutledge, who as originator of the club song and past club president (1978-79) led the refrain to the traditional musical highlight of the dinner.



Chip in full form

The evening was capped off by the featured presentation from this year's Julius Axelrod Award Medalist, Dr. Tong H. Joh. Accompanied by his wife and several members from his laboratory, Dr. Joh provided a humbling account of his research career spanning close to 40 years, with a maintained strong focus throughout on catecholamine neurobiology. His outlined personal experiences, from those as a boot-boy in the Korean war to his battles with illness,

serve to remind us how from adversity can come strength and that in science, as in other aspects of life, perseverance can win out in the end.



Dr. Tong H. Joh

Our thanks to the Club President, Dr. David Sibley, for the organization of this year's extraordinary Catecholamine Club dinner.



## Images from the 2007 Club Dinner



## Message from the President, David Sibley

As detailed above, the annual Catecholamine Club dinner and lecture was a great success. Our attendance was the highest it has been in several years, reflecting renewed interest in the Club and our activities. The venue – Zola Restaurant – located above the International Spy museum in Washington DC turned out to be perfect. Of course, the highlight of the evening was the historical lecture provided by the 2007 inaugural ASPET Julius Axelrod Award recipient, Professor Tong Joh. A special note of thanks goes to Chip Rutledge for leading us in singing the Club song. If anyone recorded that portion of the evening in digital format, please send it to me for posting on the Catecholamine Club web site. More pictures of the entire evening will be posted on the web site in the near future.

Believe it or not, 2008 represents the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Catecholamine Club! I invite all of you to visit the Club's web site (<http://www.catecholamineclub.org/pages/history.html>) to read about our history and the founding of the Club in 1968. In order to celebrate this historical event, we are planning a very special Club dinner next year, to be held in conjunction with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASPET. As detailed further below, there will be a special Julius Axelrod symposium as part of the ASPET programming that will feature as many of the former Axelrod medalists as possible, either as speakers or as attendees. We are also hoping that most of the former Presidents of the Club, will also be in attendance at next year's dinner. This will be an event that you won't want to miss! Information about the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner should be available later this year.

The Executive Committee of the Catecholamine Club held its annual meeting before this year's dinner. An important issue to emerge from that meeting was the desire to expand the Executive Committee by three additional members. There will be a call for nominations in the near future. Nominations can be made by anyone, although the current Executive Committee members will develop a short list based on these nominations. A final vote will be executed by those members of the Club who are in good standing (i.e., have paid their dues for the 2007 year). We are especially looking for nominations of younger individuals who are in early stages of their careers.

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## The Axelrod Medal Symposium: 2008

*(contributed by Lee Eiden, chairperson for the 2008 Axelrod Medal Symposium at ASPET in Spring of 2008)*

In 2006, ASPET established the Julius Axelrod Award, honoring Julie's tremendous contribution to 20<sup>th</sup> century pharmacology and those, as awardees, who have carried the spirit of understanding fundamental mechanisms of drug action to advance therapeutics, into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The first ASPET-sponsored Axelrod Award was presented to Dr. Tong Joh, at this year's (2007) ASPET/FASEB meeting in Washington, D.C. It was suggested by ASPET President Elaine Sanders-Bush at the April 2006

meeting at which the Axelrod Award was established that there be an official Centennial Symposium honoring Julie Axelrod's contributions to pharmacology in 2008. This symposium will represent the official transition of the Axelrod Medal, long maintained by the Catecholamine Club, to the ASPET-sponsored Julius Axelrod Award and Medal. The occasion will also officially 'unveil' the award, not only to ASPET, but to the other member societies of FASEB. We anticipate that most previous winners of the Axelrod Award and Medal will participate with the 2008 winner in this tribute to Julie as the apotheosis of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Neuropharmacology and a strong projection into the 21<sup>st</sup> century as illustrated by our more recent winners. The title of the symposium will be "Celebrating a Pioneer Pharmacologist and His Legacy: Creating New Drugs by Revealing Mechanisms of Drug Action in Fundamental Biological Processes".

Julie helped to launch one of the most successful chapters in the history of neuropharmacology (indeed pharmacology) when he discovered re-uptake and, perhaps more importantly, its inhibition by the newly discovered antidepressant drugs, allowing their refinement into SSRIs and NSRIs, among the most effective drugs available for the third most costly illness in the U.S. and abroad—depression. A short Essay by Solomon Snyder in Cell magazine (Cell 125, April 7, 2006: Turning off neurotransmitters) puts Julie's contributions to neuropharmacology in historical context. Julie's own essay in THE JOURNAL OF BIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY (J. Axelrod, J. Biol. Chem.) written not long before his death in 2004 and commissioned to celebrate the centennial of JBC, makes it clear that Julie's work on drug transformation and metabolism, presages his work on catecholamine metabolism and disposition, and places him firmly in the tradition of the brilliant pharmacologists, including his mentor, B.B. Brodie, honored already by ASPET.

The following four speakers, along with the 2008 Axelrod Award Medal winner, will be featured in the symposium:

**Dr. Solomon Snyder**, almost certainly Julie's most prolific student, to discuss molecules of cellular life and death, with a brief introduction on drug action, amine uptake and its inhibition, and the 'Glowinski correlation' between antidepressant clinical efficacy and inhibition of monoamine uptake which was a contribution from Julie's lab that he most treasured in later years.

**Dr. Richard Weinshilboum**, a signal contributor to, and compelling speaker on, the relationship between drug action and metabolism, and the Axelrod legacy.

**Dr. Susan Amara**, a pioneer in the molecular study of neurotransmitter transporters whose career has bridged earlier pharmacological/biochemical and molecular biological studies of neurotransmitter transporters, and helped to transform neuropharmacology into the post-modern discipline it is today.

**Dr. Marc Caron**, an eminent molecular neuropharmacologist whose recent work bringing together catecholamine signal transduction, second and third messenger signaling, and locomotor and other behaviors represents the field of molecular and cellular cognition, one of the most important new vistas of 21<sup>st</sup> century neuropharmacology.

In connection with further fund-raising to fully endow the Axelrod Award in perpetuity, we remind all of Julie's former students and colleagues that ASPET is accepting private and institutional support of the Award, through Dr. Christie Carrico of ASPET (<mailto:ccarrico@aspnet.org>). It is anticipated that past and current Axelrod Awardees will be available for a 'photo-op' at the end of the symposium, which should be a highlight of the ASPET Centennial Celebration.

#### **Axelrod Medalists (1991-2007)**

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1991	UllrichTrendelenberg
1992	Arvid Carlson
1993	Norman Weiner
1994	Robert Furchgott
1995	Irwin Kopin
1998	Sidney Spector
1999	Solomon Snyder
2000	Erminio Costa
2001	Toshi Nagatsu
2002	Salomon Langer
2003	Richard Weinshilboum
2004	Richard Palmiter
2005	Marc Caron
2006	Susan Amara
2007	Tong Joh

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## Nominations for The Julius Axelrod for 2008

The deadline for receipt of nominations for the Julius Axelrod Award for 2008 is September 15, 2007. Nominations can be made by either a member of the Catecholamine Club or the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics (ASPET). Information about the nomination process is available at the ASPET website: [http://www.aspet.org/public/awards/axelrod\\_award.html](http://www.aspet.org/public/awards/axelrod_award.html)

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## News and Events

**Ninth Symposium on Catecholamines and other Neurotransmitters in Stress:** This symposium commences on June 16th at the historic Smolenice Castle, Slovakia. Richard Kvetnansky, RNDr., D.Sc., the chief organizer for this symposia series and a pioneer in stress research, is celebrating an important birthday event this year (but not his 50th as the photo below might suggest).



Richard Kvetnansky, soon to be celebrating again

Richard was one of the first scientists to describe stress-induced changes in the enzymes responsible for catecholamine synthesis and the role of catecholamines on the regulation of

various organ systems under stress. He also introduced immobilization stress to this research area. Most recently Richard described how changes in expression of various genes and transcription factors in the adrenal gland contribute to stress-induced regulation of catecholamine synthesis.

Two investigators were selected for I.J. Kopin Travelling awards to attend the Ninth Symposium on Catecholamines and other Neurotransmitters in Stress: Dr. Mbemba Jabbi from the University of Groningen, the Netherlands; and Dr Dóra Zelena from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Experimental Medicine, Budapest, Hungary.



I.J. Kopin Travel Awardees, Dr. Mbemba Jabbi (left) and Dr. Dóra Zelena (right)

The awards to Drs. Jabbi and Zelena will be presented at the opening ceremony in Bratislava. Dr Jabbi was chosen to present his work on Monday June 18th as a special I.J. Kopin Award lecture. Congratulations to Drs. Jabbi and Zelena on their awards.

**Gordon Research Conference on Catecholamines:** The Catecholamine Gordon Conference is scheduled this August (5-10) at Oxford in the United Kingdom (Magdalen College). Information about the conference is available at the conference website <http://www.grc.org/programs.aspx?year=2007&program=catechol> The deadline for applications to the meeting is July 15.

Two investigators were selected for I.J. Kopin Travelling awards to attend the meeting: Brandon Aragona, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of North Carolina; and Garrett Stuber, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Gallo Clinic &

Research Center, UCSF. Drs. Aragona and Stuber will present their work at the 'Young Investigators' session. Congratulations to Drs. Aragona and Stuber on their awards.



I.J. Kopin Travel Awardees, Dr. Brandon Aragona (left) and Dr. Garrett Stuber (right)

**World Conference of Stress:** The 2007 World Conference of Stress will be held in Budapest, Hungary, August 23-26, 2007. This meeting, to be held in conjunction with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Cell Stress Society International Congress on Stress Responses in Biology and Medicine, will celebrate the centennial birth anniversary of Hans Selye. Further information is available at the meeting website: <http://www.stress07.com/>

**Fourteenth International Symposium on Chromaffin Cell Biology:** The 14th International Symposium on Chromaffin Cell Biology (ISCCB) is being held at Sestri Levante, Italy, from October 11th to the 15th, 2007. The highly successful ISCCB meetings are held every 2 years, almost always in beautiful and interesting locations, and this meeting is no exception. Abstracts are being received until 15th July. Further details about the meeting can be found at the symposium website: <http://www.14thisccb.unito.it/>

**Second International Symposium on Pheochromocytoma:** The 2nd International Symposium on Pheochromocytoma (ISP2008), on this occasion co-chaired by Professors Morris J. Brown and Ashley B. Grossman, will be held at Queens' college in Cambridge, England from 17th - 20th September 2008. This series of Symposia is organized by members of the Pheochromocytoma Research Support Organization (PRESSOR <http://www.pressor.org/>), a

consortium of scientists and clinicians formed as an outcome of a meeting at Cold Spring Harbor in 2003, held at the behest of Drs. James Watson and William Manger. The deadline for receipt of abstracts for ISP2008 is May 2008. Further details can be found at the Symposium website: <http://www.isp2008.ukevents.org/>

**Eisenhofer Family to Relocate:** Dr. Graeme Eisenhofer is taking up a Professorship position later this summer in the Departments of Clinical Chemistry and Medicine at the University of Dresden, Dresden, Germany.



Dr. Graeme Eisenhofer with wife, Kathy, and daughter, Suzanne

Considerable effort is being expended to bring Dresden back to its former glory as a cultural center for the Arts and Sciences.

Dr. Eisenhofer will be working with Professors Stefan Bornstein (Chair, Department of Medicine) and Gabriele Siegert (Chair, Department of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine) to establish Dresden as a Center for Catecholamine Research. He will also contribute to efforts underway involving studies on neuroendocrine tumor and chromaffin cell biology, regenerative medicine, and metabolic syndrome. Dr. Eisenhofer will maintain a continuing strong collaboration with his colleagues at the National Institutes of Health and elsewhere in the US, but also looks forward to building new and strengthening existing collaborations with colleagues throughout Europe and the United Kingdom.

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## Catecholamine Club Positions and Membership

**Executive Committee:** The membership of the Catecholamine Club Executive Committee for 2007/2008 program year is detailed below.

- Dave Sibley, President
- Esther Sabban, Secretary/Treasurer
- Irv Kopin, Membership Secretary
- Graeme Eisenhofer, CCC Editor
- Susan Amara
- Walter Dixon
- Margarita Dubocovich
- Lee Eiden
- David Goldstein
- Chip Rutledge
- Gonzalo Torres
- Dona Wong

This year there will be a call for nominations of an additional three members to the Executive Committee.

**Membership:** Membership fees are \$20 per annum or may also be paid at the reduced rate of \$50.00 for three years. Membership runs from the beginning of each calendar year to the next.

Please visit the Catecholamine Club Website (<http://www.catecholamineclub.org>) for details on methods of payment (on-line payment now available), whether you wish to join the club or renew your membership.

**Benefits of Membership:** What are the benefits of membership in the catecholamine club — what is the incentive to paying the membership fee?

1. Eligibility for the subsidy towards Catecholamine Club Dinners.
2. Eligibility to nominate investigators for Foundation for Catecholamine Research I.J. Kopin young investigator travel fellowships (Note: the nominator and mentor supporting the application must belong to the Club).
3. Eligibility of members to nominate candidates for the Julius Axelrod Award.
4. Continued receipt of Club Newsletters and ability to contribute to the News and Events forum.
5. Certain web site privileges - posting lab links, job advertisements, etc.