Notes and Announcements

University of Toronto Names Chair in Cognitive Neuroscience

Professor Terence Picton of the University of Toronto's Division of Neurology has been named the first incumbent of the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Chair in Cognitive Neuroscience at Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care.

Picton's chair is among six new chairs in biomedical research – two at the Faculty of Medicine and one each at Baycrest, the Hospital for Sick Children, Mount Sinai Hospital and The Toronto Hospital – established through a $10-million gift by Dr. Anne Tanenbaum in memory of her late husband Max. All chair holders will focus their study on the areas of neuroscience and molecular medicine, with Picton's research concentrating on cognitive disorders.

By investigating how and why aging and disease disrupt cognition, Picton hopes to discover how the brain can compensate for the problems that occur. Since 1995 he and his team at the Rotman Research Institute of Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care have been using sophisticated computational analyses to measure the brain's electrical activity during various thought processes. This is a three-tiered experiment, Picton says, since he records electrical changes in normal, young subjects, in older individuals and in people afflicted with dementia such as Alzheimer's, strokes and other neurological disorders.

"In conjunction with other imaging procedures used by other scientists in the faculty, Dr. Picton's presence at the Rotman promotes a unique contribution to the University of Toronto's exploration of the brain mechanisms of thinking and feeling – the ability to assess the timing as well as brain localization of these processes," said Dr. Cecil Yip, vice-dean, research of the Faculty of Medicine.

After receiving his MD and MSc at U of T, Picton did a PhD in neurosciences at the University of California. He has lectured worldwide, published more than 90 articles in scientific journals and currently holds research grants from, among others, the Medical Research Council, the Ontario Mental Health Foundation and the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council.

University of Toronto Names Chair in Neuroscience

Professor Philip Seeman of the University of Toronto's departments of psychiatry and pharmacology will be the first incumbent of the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Chair in Neuroscience (U of T campus).

The psychiatric community recognized Seeman for his discovery of the antipsychotic/dopamine receptor in the early 1970s, a finding that explained the action of antipsychotic drugs in the brain. Since 1990, Seeman and his research team have cloned three more receptors in the dopamine system. The team is now working on new medications that will specifically target these receptors to control psychoses.

By unravelling the workings of the schizophrenic brain, Seeman hopes to assist in the development of a more effective treatment with fewer side-effects. This research also involves other psychomotor brain diseases such as Parkinson's and Huntington's. "Seeman's contribution to our knowledge of dopamine receptor systems represents one of the most significant developments in our understanding of brian mechanisms underlying motivational systems, schizophrenia and related diseases," said Professor Paul Garfinkel, chair of U of T's department of psychiatry and president and psychiatrist-in-chief at the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry.

Seeman has received many national and international awards, including honors from the Canada Council and several American societies and universities, in his 30 years at U of T. He obtained his MD at McGill University and his PhD in life sciences at Rockefeller University before coming to Toronto.

His wife, Professor Mary Seeman of the department of psychiatry, shares his professional interests and scholarly accomplishments. She was recently named the Tapscott Chair in Schizophrenia Studies at U of T and the Clarke. Seeman credits her with originally sparking his interest in schizophrenia, though her focus is on the clinical aspects of the disease while he concentrates on its neuropsychiatric basis.

The Anne and Max Tanenbaum Chair Program in Biomedical Research includes two chairs at the Faculty of Medicine and one each at Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care, the Hospital for Sick Children, Mount Sinai Hospital and The Toronto Hospital. Dr. Anne Tanenbaum's $10-million gift is in memory of her late husband Max.

1998 Killam Research Fellowship Recipients

Bryan Kolb, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta
Psychology Neuroscience: Brain Regeneration and Recovery of Function

André Parent, Université Laval, Quebec City, Quebec
Medicine (Anatomy): The Human Brain in Evolution and Involution

Bryan Kolb from the University of Lethbridge and André Parent from Université Laval were 2 of 9 Canadian scientists to win prestigious Canada Council for the Arts Killam Research Fellowships.

The awards support scholars engaged in research projects of outstanding merit in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, health sciences, engineering and interdisciplinary studies with these fields.

Killam Research Fellowships enable Canada's best scientists and scholars to devote up to two years to full-time research and writing. The recipients are chosen by the Killam Selection Committee, which comprises 15 eminent scientists and scholars representing a broad range of disciplines.

Erratum

The description of the book "Infections of the Central Nervous System" in the book review published Can J Neurol Sci 1997; 24: 363 should have read as follows:

INFECTIONS OF THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM. 2nd Edition. 1997. Edited by W. Michael Scheld, Richard J Whitley, and David T. Durack. Published by Lippincott-Raven. 1064 pages. $C267.00 approx.

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