

ISNV

International Society for NeuroVirology

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2013 Pioneer in NeuroVirology Brian Wigdahl

Authored by Kamel Khalili



The International Society for NeuroVirology will award the 2013 Pioneer in NeuroVirology to Dr. Brian Wigdahl in recognition of his numerous achievements in research, education, and service.

Dr. Wigdahl received his Ph.D. in Microbiology from the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee in 1980. He first became interested in virology as a graduate student at the Medical College of Wisconsin. As a postdoctoral fellow, Dr. Wigdahl became interested in studying viral infections of the human nervous system. He joined the laboratory of Dr. Fred Rapp in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the Penn State University, who at the time was internationally recognized for his research on the oncogenic and neurotropic properties of the human herpesvirus family. While in Dr. Rapp's laboratory, Dr. Wigdahl made several seminal discoveries on the latency and activation of herpes simplex virus, which were published in several high-end journals including Science, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the Journal of Virology, and others.

Following his postdoctoral training, Dr. Wigdahl joined the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine in Hershey, Pennsylvania, as an Assistant Professor in 1982, thus embarking on what would be a two decade career at Penn State where he rose through the academic ranks to become a full Professor with Tenure. During that time, his studies were among the first to demonstrate infection of cells of the human nervous system with HIV-1 in cell culture models. In addition, his laboratory discovered several regulatory events controlling HIV-1 and HTLV-1 gene expression in neural and monocytic cells, which led to a better understanding of the neuropathogenesis of HIV-1/CNS diseases and HTLV-1-associated malignancy. After

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establishing his own laboratory at Penn State, Dr. Wigdahl expanded the scope of his research and focused on retroviruses, with the overall goal of identifying the molecular mechanisms involved in the pathogenesis of these viruses and the development of strategies to diagnose, prevent, and treat human diseases caused by infection with these viruses.

In 2003, Dr. Wigdahl accepted the position of Professor and Chair of Microbiology and Immunology at Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia, a position that he currently holds and where he established the Institute for Molecular Medicine and Infectious Disease and the Center for Molecular Virology and Translational Neuroscience. Dr. Wigdahl is credited with expanding the research efforts of the department; the fruits of his labor are evidenced in the nearly 300 papers published by his faculty over the past year. Dr. Wigdahl has distinguished himself with an enviable and exemplary record of external funding. He is currently the Principal Investigator on multiple NIH-funded projects and is the Leader of the International HIV Medicine and Research Core of the NIMH-funded Comprehensive NeuroAIDS Core Center with Temple University School of Medicine. Dr. Wigdahl, along with his students and colleagues, has published prolifically throughout his career, including 907 abstracted presentations, 156 full-length publications, with 15 papers currently submitted for publication or in revision. In addition, he has raised more than \$35 million in extramural support from the NIH, foundations, and other governmental and industrial sources.

Despite a highly active and productive research program, Dr. Wigdahl remains dedicated to training young scientists. Throughout his career, he has mentored 26 PhD degree students (including 4 MD/PhD students), 19 master's students, 30 MD students, 16 postdoctoral fellows, 23 technicians, 110 undergraduate students, more than 80 students on rotation, and 13 junior faculty. He has served as a course director for several courses at both Penn State and Drexel throughout his career, and continues to lecture in several courses at Drexel and serve on various educational committees at both universities. Dr. Wigdahl also serves as the Executive Director of the MS program in Molecular Medicine and two new MS Graduate Programs in Infectious Disease and Immunology in conjunction with Drs. Pamela Norton, Stephen Jennings, Fred Krebs, Anand Mehta, and Pooja Jain.

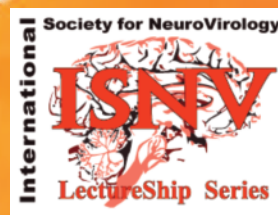
Dr. Wigdahl's service to the scientific community is extensive and varied. He has served on countless study sections and ad hoc committees for the National Institutes of Health. He reviews manuscripts for journals such as *Oncogene*, *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, *Journal of Immunology*, and the *Journal of NeuroVirology*, and is member of several editorial boards, including the *Journal of NeuroVirology*, *World Journal of Hematology*, and the *International Journal of Genomics*.

Of course, we are all aware of Dr. Wigdahl's tireless efforts on behalf of the ISNV. He is a founding member of the ISNV. He served two terms as its first President and now serves as its second Treasurer. He is also a member of the Board of Directors. Dr. Wigdahl is the 11th recipient of the ISNV's Pioneer in NeuroVirology Award and only the second recipient who was not trained as a clinician.

Over the past three decades, Dr. Wigdahl has established himself as the consummate researcher, educator, and mentor whose contributions have advanced neurovirology. His professionalism, commitment and leadership distinguish him among his peers. His genuine dedication to the advancement of the field through his research, mentoring, and extramural activities garner respect from his peers and make him an aspiration to young scientists.

The Pioneer in NeuroVirology Award

The Pioneer in NeuroVirology Award is presented in recognition of outstanding individual achievement in the field of neurovirology. Each International Symposium on NeuroVirology honors a worthy recipient of this award. Pioneers in NeuroVirology have been recognized by the International Society for NeuroVirology since 1999. The International Society for NeuroVirology will accept nominations for the 13th International Symposium on NeuroVirology to be held Spring of 2015. Please send all inquiries and nominations to mail@isnv.org.



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