

THE GUILD NEWSLETTER

Martin Friedlander, MD, PhD Wins 2010 Bressler Prize in Vision Science

A national leader in the development of new approaches to the treatment of neovascular eye diseases, Martin Friedlander, MD, PhD, has been awarded The Jewish Guild for the Blind's 2010 Alfred W. Bressler Prize in Vision Science.

Dr. Friedlander is currently Professor in the Department of Cell Biology and the Graduate Program in Macromolecular and Cellular Structure and Chemistry at The Scripps Research Institute. He is also Staff Ophthalmologist and Chief of Retina Service at Scripps Clinic and Green Hospital, both located in La Jolla, CA.

The Bressler Committee chose Dr. Friedlander because of his extraordinary work and research in cell biology and clinical issues of retinal disease, subjects he has pursued from his early days as a junior faculty member in Nobel Laureate Gunter Blobel's lab at The Rockefeller University in

New York. He trained as an ophthalmologist after building a strong background in protein chemistry and cell biology, a part of his continuing concern for the consequences of retinal disorders for which no therapy existed at that time. His commitment to a career of research and patient care at the highest level brought him to the Committee's attention.



Martin Friedlander, MD, PhD

At The Scripps Research Institute, Dr. Friedlander's interests focus on the use of biochemical, cell biological and stem cell approaches to understand basic underlying mechanisms of ocular angiogenesis and to identify therapeutic approaches to treating ocular neovascular and neurodegenerative diseases such as age-related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy. He has also

had a long-standing interest in translocation and integration of polytopic membrane proteins including rhodopsin and sodium-calcium exchangers, both important in understanding neovascular eye disease and inherited retinal degenerations such as retinitis pigmentosa.

Development of Treatments for Eye Diseases

The Scripps Research Institute received a major grant in 2007 from The National Eye Institute for pre-clinical research on the use of adult bone-marrow-derived stem cells in the

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treatment of diseases and disorders of the eye. The goal of the research team, under Dr. Friedlander's leadership, is to develop new, cell-based approaches to treatments for patients who are losing their sight because of neovascular and retinal degenerative diseases. More recently, Dr. Friedlander and Scripps were awarded another large grant from the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine for the use of chemical biological approaches and induced pluripotent stem cells to generate autologous grafts of retinal tissue for the treatment of atrophic macular degeneration.

Dr. Friedlander received his MD from the State University of New York Downstate Medical Center, his PhD from The University of Chicago and his AB from Bowdoin College. He completed his residency in ophthalmology and retina fellowship at the Jules Stein Eye Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Before joining the staff at The Scripps Research Institute in 1993, Dr. Friedlander served on the faculties of The Rockefeller University and UCLA.

The Bressler Fund

The late Alfred W. Bressler was a noted New York attorney who enjoyed a distinguished legal career for more than 70 years. Spending over 60 years at the prestigious New York law firm of Moses & Singer, Mr. Bressler held numerous positions including managing partner. During his lifetime, Mr. Bressler demonstrated a great interest in vision impairment. In recognition of his many contributions and interests, the Bressler Fund was established at The Jewish Guild for the Blind through a substantial endowment from his estate.

The Bressler Committee

The Bressler Committee has as its goal the selection of an accomplished mid-career vision care professional whose leadership, research and service have resulted in important advancements in the treatment of eye disease or rehabilitation of persons with vision loss, and whose life's work portends future excellence. ◀



The Bressler Committee meets to select the winning candidate. Seated, from the left: Cathleen Wirts, Guild Senior Vice President; Daniel Albert, MD, Univ. of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health; Alan R. Morse, PhD, The Jewish Guild for the Blind; Burton J. Kushner, MD, Univ. of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, winner of the 2005 Bressler Prize; Eliezer Peli, OD, Schepens Eye Research Institute, Harvard School of Medicine, co-winner of the 2004 Bressler Prize; and Lois E. H. Smith, MD, PhD, Harvard Medical School/Children's Hospital Boston, winner of the 2006 Bressler Prize.

Standing, from the left: Stanley Chang, MD, Columbia Univ.; Robert W. Massof, PhD, Wilmer Ophthalmological Institute, Johns Hopkins Univ., co-winner of the 2004 Bressler Prize; Joseph Walsh, MD, The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary; David R. Williams, PhD, Univ. of Rochester, winner of the 2007 Bressler Prize; John T. Flynn, MD, Columbia Univ.; Gordon Rovins, Guild Director of Special Programs; and Richard A. Lewis, MD, The Cullen Eye Institute, Baylor College of Medicine, winner of the 2003 Bressler Prize.