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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

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27th Annual Convocation Ceremony

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Memorial Sloan Kettering President Harold Varmus (left) and Boards Chairman Douglas Warner (right) present Columbia University economist and author Jeffrey Sachs with the Memorial Sloan Kettering Medal for Outstanding Contributions to Biomedical Research.

Guest speaker Jeffrey D. Sachs, Director of The Earth Institute and Quetelet Professor of Sustainable Development at Columbia University, set the tone of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center's 27th annual Academic Convocation. In a passionate and thoughtful address, he offered a compelling blueprint for eliminating extreme poverty and, speaking directly to the scientists and physicians assembled in the Rockefeller Research Laboratories Auditorium, "creating the chance to make a safer world ... for the wonders of science to unfold under your remarkably skilled eyes, hands, and brains."

"Jennifer took my lab from working mainly in human cell line systems and moved us into mouse-based systems.... Her work has laid the groundwork for many new and exciting projects that will define the role of the molecule H₂O in immune responses. She is a superb scientist."

Immunologist Lisa Denzin about Jennifer Fallas



Jennifer Fallas & Lisa Denzin



Hideki Makinoshima (left) receives a Research Fellow Award from Sloan Kettering Institute Director Thomas Kelly (center). His mentor, infectious disease specialist Michael Glickman (right).

Welcoming guests at the ceremony on May 16, Memorial Sloan Kettering President Harold Varmus lauded “the greater appreciation throughout the scientific community of the importance of the research we do in this country on health globally.” However, sounding a cautionary note, he said, “I see concerns everywhere about the nation’s commitment to science and education and, in particular, an inattention to the money that the federal government should be spending on research in the biomedical domain.”

“Li’s talent and determination have led to an important discovery. In particular, her work determined how a critical proto-oncogenic signaling pathway cross-talks with another important oncogenic signaling pathway through the regulation of the TSC2 tumor suppressor. These findings will have important prognostic and therapeutic applications in human cancer.”

Geneticist Pier Paolo Pandolfi about Li Ma



Pier Paolo Pandolfi & Li Ma

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center’s Academic Convocation recognizes and honors research as it is embodied in many forms and in many individuals. These include students who have earned their PhD degrees for work conducted in Center laboratories, younger Memorial Sloan Kettering physicians, scientists, and postdoctoral research fellows, as well as established clinicians and investigators from Memorial Sloan Kettering and beyond. This year, 16 students received their PhD degrees from Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences, an academic partnership between the Weill Medical College of Cornell University and the Sloan Kettering Institute. [A complete list of all award and PhD recipients appears below.]

“Barry took on what is perhaps the most vexing problem in bone marrow transplantation: how to separate graft-versus-host disease from the graft-versus-tumor and other beneficial effects of transplantation. He set up a model system that demonstrated very nicely how we could selectively manipulate the immune system — turning off the detrimental effects but leaving the rest of the system intact.”

Physician-scientist David Scheinberg about Barry Kappel

“The world is in an uncertain state in ways that affect our ability to address the problems that confront us daily in health, the environment, and poverty,” concluded Dr. Varmus. “Today, we honor those who are attempting to reverse the sorry state of the world by advancing knowledge, by improving clinical care, and by confronting poverty.”

“A damaged cell must make a decision either to repair the damage or self-eliminate [die] when repair cannot take place. Van investigated pathways controlling a gene, p21, and its product,

creating a switch between these decisions. She advanced our knowledge of how the pathways



Memorial Sloan Kettering President Harold Varmus (right) congratulates Memorial Sloan Kettering structural biologist Chris Lima, recipient of a Boyer Young Investigator Award.

constituted by TGF-beta, a cytokine, and Myc, an intercellular regulator, control that switch and, with that, control the fate of the cell."

Cancer biologist Joan Massagué about Hong-Van Le

Awards

Frank Lappin Horsfall, Jr. Fellowships

Sirkka Moilanen

Jayakrishnan Nandakumar



Louise and Allston Boyer Young Investigator Awards

Clinical Research Award

Barry Kappel & David Scheinberg

Cristina R. Antonescu, MD



Michael La Quaglia (left), Chief of Memorial Sloan Kettering's Pediatric Surgical Service, receives the Willet F. Whitmore Award for Clinical Excellence from Memorial Sloan Kettering Physician-in-Chief Robert Wittes

Basic Research Award

Christopher D. Lima, PhD

Research Fellow Awards

Hideki Makinoshima, PhD

Matthew Neale, PhD

C. Chester Stock Award Lectureship

Angela M. Hartley Brodie, PhD

Willet F. Whitmore Award for Clinical Excellence

Michael P. La Quaglia, MD



Hong-Van Le & Joan Massagué

Katharine Berkan Judd Award Lectureship

Richard D. Kolodner, PhD

The Memorial Sloan Kettering Medal for Outstanding Contributions to Biomedical Research

Jeffrey D. Sachs

PhD Recipients

Karen Beckett

Garrett J. DeYulia, Jr.

Jennifer L. Fallas

Meigang Gu

Wenjun Guo

Hildur Rut Helgadottir

Jaspreet Singh Jaggi

Sagun KC

Barry Jay Kappel

Tae-Hee Kim

Hong-Van Le

Li Ma

Alan H. Shih, MD

Jan-Willem Theunissen

Na Zhang

Hui Zhu

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