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DR. RIPPS AND JANE ZAKEVICIUS, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

After 23 years at UIC, Dr. Harris Ripps retires

Harris Ripps, DSc, PhD. Professor Emeritus in the UIC departments of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, Anatomy and Cell Biology, and Physiology and Biophysics, announced his retirement this fall. Dr. Ripps was director of the Laboratory of Retinal Physiology and Neurobiology since joining the Department in 1985.

Dr. Ripps has led a long and distinguished career in basic science and clinically related vision research, making significant contributions to the treatment of retinal diseases. His research has resulted in better understanding of the subcellular origins of abnormalities that affect the structural and functional integrity of the photoreceptors in inherited night-blinding disorders. Early in his career, Dr. Ripps identified a defect in the retinal nerve cells responsible for night vision, altering profoundly the conventional wisdom surrounding the understanding and treatment of inherited night blindness.

In 1962, soon after he joined the Department of Ophthalmology at the New York University School of Medicine, he was awarded an NIH Special Fellowship to study retinal photochemistry at the University of London. As a result of the research conducted there and on his return to NYU, he received a Research Career Development Award from the U.S. Public Health Service that launched a successful academic career spanning more than four decades. During those years, 23 of which were at UIC, Dr. Ripps received numerous prestigious awards for his research contributions. Among the most noteworthy are the Edridge-Green Award from The Royal College of Surgeons of England and the Proctor Medal of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology.

Dr. Ripps attributes his good fortune to the support and encouragement he received from Jeanne, his wife of more than 59 years, and the many chairmen he has served, giving special mention to Dr. Goodwin Breinin (at NYU); Dr. Mort Goldberg who recruited him to UIC; Dr. Jack Chandler, who championed his nomination for the Charles I. Young Lions of Illinois Endowed Chair in Ocular Research; and, Dr. Dimitri Azar, current Department Head, for creating a nurturing research environment at UIC.

Dr. Ripps expressed his indebtedness to his many colleagues on the UIC faculty, and especially to Dr. Haohua Qian and Jane Zakevicius, his competent and faithful research assistant of 40 years.



The Department will host a dinner honoring Dr. Ripps on the eve of the 2009 annual meeting of the Association for Vision and Research in Ophthalmology on May 1 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. For more information, contact 312-996-6990.

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1. Robert Chang, PhD

Assistant Professor and Director, Angiogenesis Research Laboratory

Kojima T, Azar DT, Chang JH. Neostatin-7 regulates bFGF-induced corneal lymphangiogenesis. *FEBS Lett.* 2008 Jul 23;582(17):2515-20. PMID: 18570894

"Collagen XVIII is a basement membrane and can be cleaved by matrix metalloproteinases to generate anti angiogenic fragments. One of the proteolytic fragments of collagen XVIII termed neostatin-7. In this paper, we demonstrated that proteolytic fragments of collagen XVIII can inhibit corneal lymphangiogenesis. This fragment possesses anti-angiogenic and lymphangiogenic activity which inhibit blood and lymphatic vessel growth. This fragment has potential to be a therapeutic drug to treat corneal transplantation rejection."



2. Jose de la Cruz MD, MS

Assistant Professor and Director, Artificial Cornea Program, Comprehensive Ophthalmology Services

Garcia JP Jr, de la Cruz J, Rosen RB, Buxton DF. Imaging implanted keratoprotheses with anterior-segment optical coherence tomography and ultrasound biomicroscopy. *Cornea.* 2008 Feb;27(2):180-188. PMID: 18216573

"This work has given us new information in how the different size keratoprosthesis are affected by the variable anterior chamber depths of our patients. This may or may not affect the possibility of scarring and chronic inflammation inside the eye, as the anterior chamber structures come in contact with the implanted keratoprosthesis. It will also advance the understanding in artificial cornea surgery and the long term implications of the different models used."



3. Molly Gilbert, MD

Assistant Professor, Neuro-Ophthalmology Service

Gilbert ME, De Sousa EA, Savino PJ. Ocular myasthenia gravis treatment: The case against prednisone therapy and thymectomy. *Arch Neurol.* 2007 Dec;64(12):1790-2. PMID: 18071047

"This article is an opinion piece regarding the use of oral prednisone in the treatment of ocular myasthenia gravis. It summarizes the current literature on this topic including the controversy regarding whether or not oral prednisone reduces the risk of ocular myasthenia generalizing to the whole body. It also discusses the use of thymectomy to prevent generalization of myasthenia gravis. The prevailing opinion regarding thymectomy is 'Don't do it,' but there is still mixed opinion regarding the use of prednisone."



4. David Pepperberg, PhD

Searls-Schenk Professor of Ophthalmology and Director, Photoreceptor Research Laboratory

Pawar AS, Qtaishat NM, Little DM & Pepperberg DR (2008) Recovery of rod photoresponses in ABCR-deficient mice. *Invest. Ophthalmol. Vis. Sci.* 49:2743-2755.

"The ability of rod photoreceptor cells of the retina to 'dark-adapt', i.e., to recover full electrophysiological sensitivity after the eye's exposure to bright light, is essential for normal vision. The rod protein known as 'ABCR' plays a role in the processing of retinoids (vitamin A compounds) within the rods, and there is ample evidence that retinoid processing is critical for dark adaptation. Furthermore, mutations of ABCR are associated with Stargardt disease and other retinal degenerative diseases. However, the precise extent to which ABCR functions in dark adaptation has remained unclear. Using state-of-the-art electroretinographic (ERG) techniques, our lab has studied the electrical responses of dark-adapting rods in genetically engineered ABCR-deficient mice, and compared the data obtained with those obtained from control mice that possess ABCR. Their results provide important new insights into ABCR's activity. Specifically, they raise a new hypothesis regarding the interplay of ABCR activity, retinoid processing and rod dark adaptation."



5. Deepak Shukla, PhD

Associate Professor and Director, Ocular Virology Laboratory

Tiwari V, Shukla SY, Yue BYJT, Shukla D. Herpes simplex virus type 2 entry into cultured human corneal fibroblasts is mediated by herpesvirus entry mediator. *J Gen Virology.* 2007 Aug;88(Pt 8):2106-10. PMID: 17622611

"Ocular herpes is normally caused by Herpes Simplex virus type-1. This study by my research lab, in collaboration with Dr. Beatrice Yue, demonstrates that the cells of the inner cornea or the stroma can also get infected by genital herpes or Herpes Simplex virus type-2. This very interesting discovery not only demonstrates the ability of genital herpes to infect cells of the inner cornea, it also identifies a protein called HVEM as the cellular receptor for the virus. In addition, we found that blocking of this protein by antibodies prevents viral infection. Clearly this discovery will have long-term implications in the development of new anti-viral drugs to treat genital herpes-related eye diseases."



6. Jacob Wilensky, MD

Professor of Ophthalmology, Glaucoma Service

Wilensky J. Argon laser trabeculoplasty. In: Chen, Teresa C. *Glaucoma Surgery. Surgical techniques in ophthalmology.* Philadelphia, PA: Saunders Elsevier, 2008.

Dr. Wilensky was one of the pioneers in laser trabeculoplasty, and published one of the first reports on this technique in 1981. Subsequently he participated in two National Eye Institute sponsored Clinical Trials evaluating the role of ALT in glaucoma therapy. In this chapter he shares the results of those and other clinical experiences with the readers to help teach them how to perform this technique and to indicate how and when it should be used to treat Glaucoma patients.

