Promoting Cardiovascular Education, Research and Prevention

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In This Issue

Dr. James Willerson, President of the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences, is pleased to announce the election of two individuals for the award of Medal of Merit for 2012. This highest honour of the Academy is being bestowed upon Drs. Piero Anversa, Boston, USA and Laurentiu Popescu, Bucharest, Romania for their outstanding achievements in cardiovascular education and research. Previous winners of this prestigious medal were Drs. Michael DeBakey, Richard Bing, Robert Furchgott, Edwin Krebs, Eugene Braunwald, Robert Lefkowitz, Sir John Vane, James Willerson, Sir John Radda, Victor Dzau, Robert Jennings, Sir Magdi Yacoub, Louis Ignarro, Jutta Schaper, Wilbert Keon, Wolfgang Schaper, Nirmal Ganguly, Salvador Moncada, Howard Morgan, Ernesto Carafoli, Eric Olson, Laszlo Szekeres, Arnold Katz, Jay Cohn and Salim Yusuf.

Professor Piero Anversa, MD – Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

As one of the leading cardiovascular scientists, Professor Piero Anversa (MD), has made numerous substantial contributions to regenerative medicine. He received his MD from the University of Parma and has been a Professor of Pathology at both New York Medical College and the University of Parma. Professor Anversa is currently teaching at the Brigham and Women's Hospital as a Professor of Anesthesia and Professor of Medicine in addition to his exceptional work as the Director of the Center of Regenerative Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital at Harvard Medical School.

His cutting-edge research focuses on myocardial regenerative capabilities mediated by both exogenous and endogenous progenitor cells. His laboratory has shattered the preconceived notion that the heart is a post-mitotic organ characterized by an unchanging number of cells throughout a lifetime. His findings established the concept that multi-potent cardiac stem cells could be involved in the physiological turnover of cardiomyocytes, endothelial cells, smooth muscle cells, and fibroblasts. His exceptional work has been published in numerous high-impact journals including the New England ▶

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Journal of Medicine, Circulation Research, The Lancet, Nature Medicine, Nature, and Cell. Some titles of papers include "Bone marrow cells regenerate infarcted myocardium", "Chimerism of the transplanted heart", "Evidence that human cardiac myocytes divide after infarction", "Progenitor cells from the explanted heart generate immunocompatible myocardium within the transplanted donor heart", and "Functionally competent cardiac stem cells can be isolated from endomyocardial biopsies of patients with advanced cardiomyopathies". His papers illustrate a key understanding of both basic science and clinical relevance in his research as indicated by his work in translational medicine. He has also been a primary investigator in the clinical trial SCIPIO, Cardiac Stem Cells in Patients with Ischemic Cardiomyopathy", which has shown that cardiac stem cells benefit heart failure patients, a newsworthy discovery.

He has been given numerous awards for his research including the Research Achievement Award of the American Heart Association (2004), and the Louis and Arthur Lucian Award (2008). In 2003 he was given the honour of being the Distinguished Scientist of the American Heart Association. From 2008-2013 he will serve on the NIH/NIA Board of Scientific Counselors.

Professor Laurentiu M. Popescu (MD, PhD, Dr. h.c. mult.) – "Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Bucharest, Romania

Professor Laurentiu M. Popescu (MD, PhD, Dr. h.c. mult.) is an exceptional cardiovascular scientist who was valedictorian of his graduating MD class at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Bucharest. He completed his PhD in 1971 at the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy in Bucharest, and completed his post-doctorate at the University of Leiden in The Netherlands. He has held numerous distinguished positions including being the General Director of "Victor Babes" National Institute of Pathology in Bucharest, Vice-President of the International Society for Adaptive Medicine, and the President of the Medical Sciences Section of the Romanian Academy of Sciences. He is currently the President of the Federation of European Academies of Medicine. In addition, he has been a member of numerous organizations including the American Society for Cell Biology, the International Committee of Histochemistry and Cytochemistry, the International Society for Heart Research, and is currently serving as part of the Steering Committee for Regenerative Medicine of the European Science Foundation.

The majority of his progressive, high-caliber research focuses on caveolae regulation of intracellular $Ca2^{+}$ in smooth muscles, the role of cGMP and vasodilation via G-kinase, and most recently, his discovery of novel interstitial cells known as telocytes. He has published more 125 articles in over 40 international peer-reviewed journals including American Journal of Physiology, Cardiovascular Research, Cellular Physiology and Biochemistry, Autophagy, Journal of Cell Biology, and Circulation. He is also the founder and Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Cellular and Molecular Medicine which has an impressive 5-year impact factor of 5.043. He has also been on the editorial board of numerous international journals such as Cell Transplantation, the International Journal of Translational Medicine, and the World Journal of Stem Cells.

Professor Popescu has been recognized for his work at an international level as indicated by his many awards, invitations to international symposia and as a speaker at world-class institutions. He has received Doctor Honoris Causa from ten different universities in Italy, Hungary, and Romania. His prizes include the Gold Medal of the Paris Academy – "Rene Descartes" University (1998), the Gold Medal of the "Albert Schweitzer" International Academy (2002), and has been elected as one of the Top 100 IBC Health Professionals (2009). His many invitations to speak about his research include the Chinese Heart Congress/International Heart Forum in Beijing, China (2010) and the 4th Global Conference on "Recent Advances in Cardiovascular Sciences" at the Delhi Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences & Research in New Delhi, India (2010). He has also been an invited lecturer to world-class university institutions including Harvard Medical School, USA (2010), the University College of London, UK (2011), and the University of Edinburgh, UK (2011).