



## Congratulations / Félicitations

***Dr. Gillian Wu, Emerita Professor, University of Toronto and York University***

***The John D Reynolds Award Recipient***

My research love has been and will always be *The Generation of Diversity* – How our immune system generates its ability to recognize and respond to, in some way, essentially any morsel that it encounters. I have had many many memorable times in research, in academia, and in administration, but when I look back there is no question that my top memories are watching students and colleagues, and the Canadian

Society for Immunology, dance on the world stage. A bit of (unasked for) advice: Search out support from people who are important; never be a shrinking violet (but always take responsibility for your and your lab's actions); be incredibly lucky (the right field at the right time); work with the best students, trainees, technicians and colleagues; give more than you take; and open your eyes to see or be shown opportunities that require taking risks (while remaining funded). I expect you all have received and given similar, if not the same, advice to your colleagues and trainees.

I took a typical route for us scientists – a love and passion for science, a curiosity about everything around us, the ability to figure out things, and learn, and an annoying habit of wanting to know and understand details. My route included a BSc at McMaster, a MSc in Medical Biophysics at U of T (first woman to graduate), marriage, a technical position in the Donner Radiation Labs in UC Berkeley, and then NIH in Bethesda MD, the birth of two sons, Tim and David, return to Toronto and lecture slots in Microbiology and Histology, return to graduate school in Medical Biophysics, and a PhD at the age of 40. And here is where the risk and luck blessed me – I (with my sons in tow) joined the Basel Institute for Immunology in Switzerland, home of V(D)J Recombination. My time in Basel along with top notch colleagues and my PhD focus in the newish field of Molecular Immunology, prepared me optimally for an Assistant Professor position in 1986 in the newly formed Department of Immunology at the University of Toronto. Our lab's research was valuable (published and funded) due to the insights and golden hands of many students, post docs, technicians and colleagues. I was associated with winning teams. Lucky me! I joined York University as Dean of Science and Engineering in 2001 with the mandate to develop a Faculty of Engineering, build up the Biological Sciences and do what could be done with Physics. Again, I was part of a great team, it was a fun and challenging time, and we were successful. As you are no doubt aware - academics have Sabbaticals! What a privilege! A time to be selfish, and think and do only what interests us. Over my years I have had sabbaticals at Clare Hall in Cambridge University (UK), Biological Sciences at the U. of Canterbury (New Zealand), the Pasteur Institute (Paris), and the Gulbenkian Institute for Science (Portugal). What a life!

I attended my first CSI Annual meeting in 1987 and have attended all but one since. I was fortunate to have served in the many CSI hierarchical positions in the CSI executive and to have served with the now “oldies” of the CSI - John Reynolds, Hermann Ziltener, Michelle Letarte, Linda Matsuuchi, Mike Gold, and Mike Ratcliffe to name a few of us. One of the most challenging times in the CSI for me was organizing the Blue Mountain CSI Annual Meeting in 2003 with Michelle Letarte, but WITHOUT Lori Coulthurst. And I'm not sure which of us deserved a medal for that one!

But for me, as important as our research results have been, the results of the supervisory roles, the committees, boards, and societies in which I have served, have made me most proud and grateful. I particularly valued a early 1990's committee that resulted in MRC giving maternity (and later parental) leave to MRC funded grad students, and securing in 2004, Imperial Oil funding for summer science camps for children at York U. And I also very much valued being the Dept. of Immunology's Graduate Co-coordinator, and serving on the Triple I CIHR advisory board, both for seven years. And for being part of the CSI executive for what seemed to carry on forever... As I wrote in the beginning of this biographical sketch, looking back, by far my most valued memories focus on mentoring (perhaps AKA giving unasked for advice!) and seeing the accomplishments of my trainees, my colleagues, the boards and committees I served on, and the Societies in which I played a role. The CSI is what it is due to the service of first the Oldies, and now the new generations. I am so proud to be honoured with the John D. Reynolds Award.