

Congratulations / Félicitations



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The John D Reynolds Award Recipient

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I obtained my undergraduate and graduate training in Fribourg Switzerland in the field of Biochemistry. The department and number of students enrolled in the program were relatively small, providing an excellent environment for interactions with the instructors. An added benefit was that the university had an official bilingual environment where German and French had equal standing. Lectures, exams etc. could thus be held in either language environment, depending on the preference of the teacher; every student had to

have at least a basic understanding of the second language. At more senior levels, the lectures, journal clubs etc. were held in English. Thus based solely on the multiple languages we had to deal with, the academic environment was very stimulating.

My PhD project, on leukotrienes produced by eosinophils, exposed me to some basic cell biology and immunology and provided the stimulus to seek a postdoctoral position in these areas. I then moved to the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI) in Melbourne Australia where I worked in the laboratory of John Schrader. The intense pace of work and the rich and stimulating environment at WEHI was most enjoyable and the time went by way too fast. Just as my postdoc time came to an end I was offered the opportunity to accompany John Schrader to Vancouver and help building the Biomedical Research Centre at UBC.

At the BRC I established my own lab and became active in the area of Glycobiology with focus on study of adhesion receptors and their carbohydrate modifications that provide directional cues to cells. Our work contributed to the understanding of mechanisms that control recruitment of effector cells to sites of inflammation. More recently we discovered that some of the same mechanisms are also important in the control of stem cell homing to the thymus.

My involvement with the CSI started quiet early. I was fortunate to have attended the first CSI meeting in Lake Louise in 1987, just a few months after I had arrived in Canada. For the third CSI meeting I helped John Reynolds, who was the meeting organizer, produce the abstract book. It is fair to say that John did most of the work, as he was well ahead in using computers to facilitate the book editing and meeting organization in general. I think that at the time I barely knew where the "on-and-off" switch was on my Mac Plus and where I needed to insert the floppy disk!

While CSI members from the Prairie Provinces organized the Western CSI meetings during the 1990's, always with significant involvement from John Reynolds, it was finally up to folks west of the Rockies to get involved and I was asked to chair the organizing committee for the 2003 CSI meeting in Lake Louise. With the help of team-UBC that in 2003 consisted of Linda Matsuuchi, Mike Gold and Lori Coulthurst, along with John Reynolds' continued support as Webmaster and providing the local know-how, the meeting organization worked very well. With the encouragement we received from the success of this first organizing experience and the help of an extended team-UBC I volunteered to run the 2005, 2009 and 2013 CSI meetings in Whistler.

In 2005 I joined the CSI executive as Vice President and it was on my watch as CSI President in 2007 that John Reynolds after over 20 years of service to the CSI community handed over management of the CSI website and CSI membership registration to Lori Coulthurst. Over the years it has been my continued pleasure to participate in the CSI, be it as researcher, meeting organizer or member of council and executive. I value the collegial environment the Society offers to its members. I would like to thank all my colleagues for contributing to such a good environment and am looking forward to many more future meetings.