



## Congratulations / Félicitations

**Dr. Tania Watts**

**Professor and Sanofi Pasteur Chair in Human Immunology,  
University of Toronto**

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

I received my PhD degree in Biochemistry at the University of Alberta with Bill Paranchych, followed by post-doctoral studies in the Chemistry at Stanford, with Harden McConnell, where I had my first introduction to immunology.

In 1986, I became Assistant professor at the University of Toronto, joining the newly formed department of Immunology. I am currently Professor of Immunology at the University of Toronto, Director of the Faculty of Medicine Flow Cytometry facility, and Director of the Toronto Human Immunology Network, a FOCIS center of excellence. Since 2009 I have held the Sanofi Pasteur Chair in Human Immunology at the University of Toronto.

My current interests are focused on tumor necrosis factor family members and control of infection, as well as the role of TNFRs in cancer cell survival. Research continues to be my passion and I am enjoying it more than ever, thanks to an outstanding group of trainees and the long-term support of CIHR. This year has been a great year for the lab. Angela Zhou and William Chu showed that TNFR family members are very important in the establishment of tissue resident memory T cells (Zhou, Mucosal Immunology 2017, Chu, submitted). Frank Chang with help from almost everyone in the lab, showed that during the early stages of viral infection TNF family ligands are not expressed on classical dendritic cells, but on inflammatory monocyte derived APC where they provide a post-priming checkpoint for T cell accumulation not only in the lymphoid organs but also in the tissues (Chang et al. Immunity 2017; Chu et al submitted). We continue to focus on the role of TNFR family members in human immunity and Ali Abdul Sater, who I am proud to say is now Assistant professor at York, found a new role for the TNFR associated signaling adaptor TRAF1 in limiting inflammation through TLRs. Ali was helped by the outstanding contribution of Maria Edilova, our resident human immunology expert. They showed that a SNP in the 5' region of TRAF1 resulted in lower TRAF1 but exacerbated monocyte responses to PAMPs, explaining the previously noted association of TRAF1 SNPs with rheumatic disease (Abdul-Sater, Edilova, et al. Nature Immunology, 2017).

I attended my first CSI meeting at Mont Gabriel in 1988 - first time at CSI and the first time I tried downhill skiing. CSI has been a scientific home for me for 30 years - it's been great to meet old friends and to have such a friendly place for our students and fellows to present their early stage research. I became a member of CSI council in 2005, and moved up through the ranks, completing my term as Past-Past President (Awards Committee) 10 years later. I am still engaged with CSI as the CSI representative at FOCIS. Lori Coulthurst has been an invaluable mainstay of CSI all those years, and I especially appreciated her help during my term as President. Hermann Ziltener was a fantastic mentor when I took over from him as President. It is a tremendous honor to receive the Reynolds award, and to follow in the footsteps of such wonderful colleagues. I encourage all the Canadian Immunologists to stay connected with CSI; it's been a wonderful 30 years so far!