

## The Decades of Dubner Celebration

March 17–19, 2010

Baltimore, Maryland, USA

To celebrate the distinguished scientific and professional career of Dr Ronald Dubner, the Department of Neural and Pain Sciences at the University of Maryland Dental School organized a symposium to which neuroscientists from all corners of the world were invited. The response was overwhelming—colleagues, collaborators, and trainees attended a 3-day conference, enjoying spectacular science and paying tribute to a man who influenced pain research through five decades. Through his 30 years as branch chief at the US National Institute of Dental Research/National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research and 15 years as chair of Biomedical Sciences at the University of Maryland Dental School from which he stepped down in 2008, one thing is glaringly obvious for all those around him—Ron Dubner shows no sign of ever slowing down.

The one-of-a-kind symposium included six thematic sections in which Ron directly influenced the field or influenced the scientists in that area: (1) primary afferents, (2) neuropathic pain/glia, (3) visceral pain, (4) plasticity and modulation of pain, (5) orofacial pain, and (6) imaging. Respective session chairs Richard Meyer, Michael Tal, Richard Traub, Ke Ren, Barry Sessle, and Joel Greenspan led an international lineup of speakers. Session 1 featured presentations by Michael Gold, Michael Iadarola, Koichi Noguchi, and Jin Ro. Session 2 included Gary Bennett, Joyce DeLeo, Ru-Rong Ji, Jennifer Laird, and Stephen McMahon. Session 3 incorporated talks by Karen Berkley, Fernando Cervero, Gerald Gebhart, Emeran Mayer, and Meredith Robbins. Alan Basbaum, Marshall Devor, Donna Hammond, Lorne Mendell, and Ze'ev Seltzer contributed to Session 4, as did Raymond Dionne, Kenneth Hargreaves, Yoshiki Imamura, Koichi Iwata, William Maixner, and Yair Sharav to Session 5. The final session 6 included presentations by Catherine Bushnell, Robert Coghill, Richard Gracely, and Christian Stohler. The finale of the immersion into pain science consisted of the reflections of Ron Dubner, remembering the hundreds of pain researchers whose lives and careers that he touched.

In session breaks and at social gatherings, including a gala dinner and roast, fond Dubner stories filled the air, providing a unique backdrop to an otherwise scientifically spectacular program. Besides his stellar impact on pain research, participants also learned about Ron's contributions at the University Maryland, where his legacy is the transformation of not only the brain thrust in the field of pain and neurosciences, but also the strong programs in microbial pathogenesis and oropharyngeal carcinogenesis that emerged under his leadership.

In sum, it was a symposium filled with top-notch science and presentations by numerous colleagues and friends that were filled with admiration for a man who has made a difference in more ways than one.

Christian Stohler and Richard Traub