

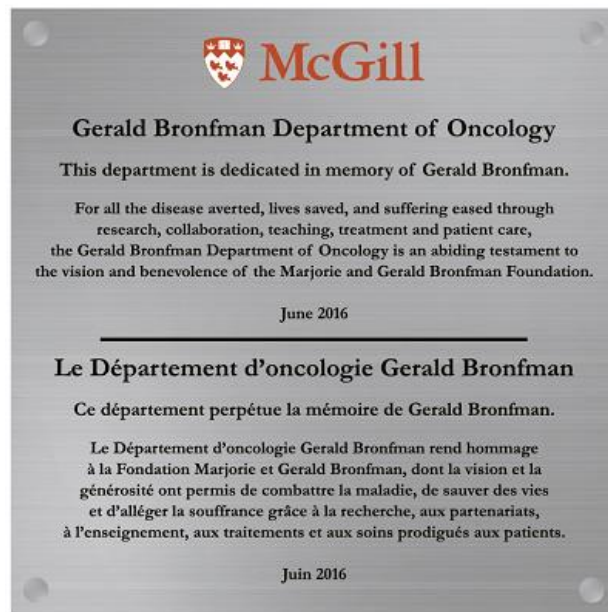


Fifth Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology Distinguished Lecture and Awards Ceremony

**Celebrating More Than 30 Years of Excellence in
Education, Research and Patient Care**



Portrait of Gerald Bronfman



Plaque dedicated to the memory of Gerald Bronfman

The Fifth Gerald Bronfman Distinguished Lecture and Awards Ceremony was held on November 29, 2021. This annual event is in recognition of the Department's leading patron, Gerald Bronfman, and his family. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was held virtually via Zoom with livestreaming on YouTube. The webcast is available for viewing at <https://youtu.be/Df9TqbzpmZE>. The event, which had over 75 viewers and participants, began with a welcome message from the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Dr. David Eidelman, who acknowledged the generous support of the Bronfman family and congratulated the Department on the creation of its task forces on COVID-19 and Cancer and on Global Oncology as well as its successful inaugural year of the Graduate Diploma in Oncology. Dr. Eduardo Franco, Department Chair, acknowledged the generous support of the Bronfman family, talked about the mission of the Department and then introduced this year's Distinguished Speaker, Dr. Randy Schekman.

Distinguished Lecture – “Life cycle of a cell biologist from inside the cell to exosomes”

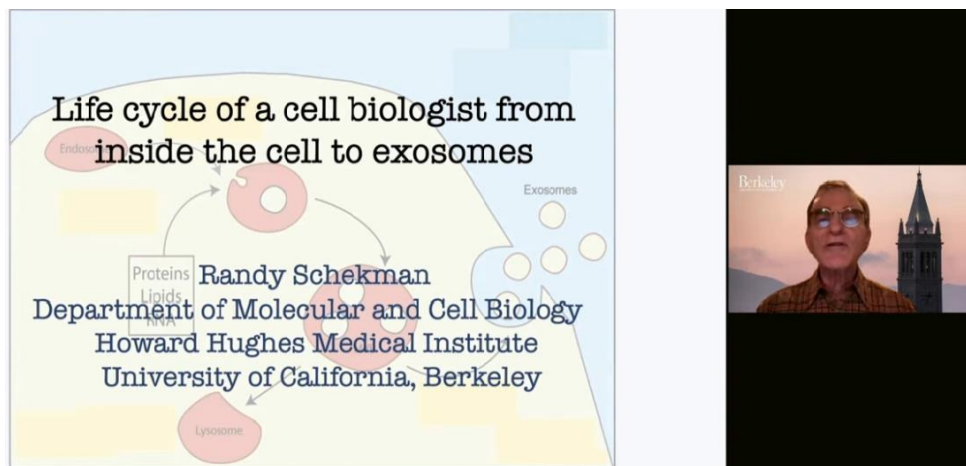
Dr. Randy Schekman is a cell biologist who has made major discoveries related to cell membrane assembly, how cells effect vesicular transport, and how the Golgi apparatus functions as part of a

complex secretory pathway. He and his team have studied a simple eukaryote, yeast, as well as human cells to investigate mechanisms of intracellular vesicular transport and formation of extracellular vesicles, and their subset called exosomes. These exosomes serve as conveyors for proteins, lipids, and RNA to bring them from parent cells to distant tissues as part of normal and pathological functions. Because of his prominent work on intracellular vesicle traffic and the genetic control of this process he received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2013.

Dr. Schekman received a BA in molecular sciences from the University of California in Los Angeles in 1970 and a PhD in 1974 from Stanford University for research on DNA replication working with Arthur Kornberg, the recipient of the 1959 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. After a 2-year postdoctoral fellowship at UCSD he joined the faculty at UC Berkeley in 1976. There he ascended through the ranks to earn a full professorship in the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology in 1989. In 1990 he was appointed Investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. He served as Chair of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Biology, UC Berkeley from 2002-2012. In 2005 he founded and became the first director of UC Berkeley's Stem Cell Center.

In addition to the 2013 Nobel Prize, he received Canada's 1996 Gairdner International Award, the 2002 Albert Lasker Award in Basic Medical Research, and several other prominent awards. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Medicine, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, a Foreign Associate of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, a Foreign Associate of the Royal Society of London and an Honorary Academician of the Academia Sinica. In 1999-2017 he served as Editor-in-Chief of the Annual Reviews of Cell and Developmental Biology. From 2006-2011 he served as Editor-in-Chief of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Since 2018, Dr Schekman turned his attention to the fight against Parkinson's disease. He is the Scientific Director of Aligning Science Across Parkinson's (ASAP), a research funding initiative that coordinates targeted basic research and resources to uncover the roots of Parkinson's disease.



Screenshot of Distinguished Lecturer, Dr. Randy Schekman and his slide presentation

Dr. Schekman's talk focused on the experiments in his laboratory which identified mechanisms of intercellular communication via exosomes, small vesicles secreted from cells. The experiments demonstrated that transfer of protein and RNA molecules from one cell to another can alter cellular behaviors. This process allows for cancer cells to release bioactive molecules to nearby cells in the microenvironment and is thought to be important for cancer cell survival and spread. Dr. Schekman's team identified a unique process that involves the tethering and fusion of a donor cell to an acceptor cell via a tubule extending from the donor cell. A further understanding of this process requires the

identification and characterization of proteins involved in tethering and trafficking between cells. To address this, CRISPR/Cas9 genetic screens will be performed to identify all of the genes required for this process.

Awards Ceremony

The Awards Ceremony was divided into three parts: (i) presentation of four Kuok Fellowships; (ii) presentation of four Merit Awards and (iii) presentation of the Lifetime Achievement Award. Due to the virtual nature of this year's event, modifications were made to the awards ceremony. From his McGill office, Dr. Franco introduced each of the award winners and held up the corresponding award to the camera. The citations for each of the Merit Award winners were read by their respective nominators, Dean Eidelman read the citation for the Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, and each of the five recipients were invited to say a few words after being presented with their award.

(i) Kuok Fellowships

The Kuok Fellowships, offered by the Rossy Cancer Network (RCN) in collaboration with the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology, support graduate training opportunities in research domains relevant to the RCN. Four Kuok Fellowship awards were presented, two at the master's level and two at the doctoral level.

- **Justine Albert**, MSc candidate (supervised by Dr. Carmen Loisel) for the project entitled, *Palliative and end-of-life experiences among English-speaking informal caregivers in Québec*.
- **Nicole Andersen**, MA candidate (co-supervised by Dr. Robert Turcotte and Dr. Annett Körner) for the project entitled, *Evaluating the Greatest Impacts on Health-Related Quality of Life in Soft-tissue Sarcoma Patients*.
- **Maria Doris Duran Napolitano**, PhD candidate (co-supervised by Dr. Belinda Nicolau and Dr. Jay Kaufman) for the project entitled, *Impact of diagnosis-to-treatment intervals on head and neck cancer patients*.
- **Renata Iskander**, PhD candidate (supervised by Dr. Jonathan Kimmelman) for the project entitled, *Patient Burden in Drug Development: An Empirical and Normative Investigation*.



(ii) Departmental Merit Awards

In previous years awards were given in three categories, (i) Academic, Clinical or Research Support; (ii) Teaching and Mentorship; (iii) Research or Clinical Service. As of this year there were four merit awards given, as the category of Research or Clinical Service has been split into two distinct awards: (i) Research; (ii) Clinical Service and Innovation.

The *Academic, Clinical or Research Support Award* was given to **Tatjana Nisic** (nominator, Dr. Jan Seuntjens). Ms. Nisic received an M.A. in the History of Art from the University of Belgrade and also completed specialized studies for Professional, Scientific and Technical Translator, English language from the Association of Scientific and Technical Translators of Serbia. She joined the Medical Physics Unit at the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) in 2005 where she has played an important role in the day-to-day functioning of the Unit. Her duties include the coordination and administration of research grants, conference organization, budget management, translation and overseeing the procurement and maintenance of equipment and supplies. She is also the coordinator of the CREATE MPRTN program (Collaborative Research and Training Experience Program - Medical Physics Research Training Network) which includes faculty at McGill, Université Laval, Harvard, and others.

The *Teaching and Mentorship Award* was given to **Dr. Cristiano Ferrario** (nominator, Dr. Victoria Mandilaras). Dr. Ferrario, a medical oncologist at the Jewish General Hospital, received a Doctor in Medicine and Surgery from the University of Milan. In 2013 he joined the McGill Department of Oncology as an Assistant Professor. He is a recognized leader in breast and genitourinary cancers, lecturing regionally and nationally on the subjects and is actively involved in phase 1-3 clinical trials. As the Competence by Design Lead for the Medical Oncology Residency Training Program, Dr. Ferrario played an instrumental role in helping reform the training program to meet the educational needs of the residents. Furthermore, he is highly regarded by the residents as a superb educator and role-model.

The *Research Award* was given to **Dr. Lucy Gilbert** (nominator, Dr. Luis Souhami). Dr. Gilbert received MBBS and MD degrees from the University of Mysore in India. She joined the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) in 2001 and is a Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the Department of Oncology at McGill. Dr. Gilbert set up the Women's Health Research Unit for Gynecologic Cancer at the MUHC where she has been involved in multinational clinical trials for gynecological cancers. As a champion of early detection of ovarian and endometrial cancer she started the successful CIHR-funded DovEE (Diagnosing Ovarian and Endometrial Cancer Early) study which resulted in a publication in *Lancet Oncology*. The trial has now expanded to Phase 3 (DovEEgene) looking at the possible value of genomic intrauterine pap test for early detection of ovarian and endometrial cancer which is funded by Genome Canada. This work was recognized as the Top Discovery of 2019 by the Prix du public Québec Science. Dr. Gilbert was recently honoured as one of Top 25 Women of Influence in Canada.

The *Clinical Service and Innovation Award* was given to **Dr. Manuel Borod** (nominator Dr. Armen Aprikian). Dr. Borod received an MDCM degree from McGill University in 1976, a Master's in Public Health from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1984 and an MBA from Concordia University in 1987. He joined the McGill Department of Medicine as an Assistant Professor in 2000 and the Department of Oncology in 2007. Throughout his lengthy career at the McGill University Health Centre and affiliated centres, Dr. Borod has worked tirelessly to provide top notch clinical service to individuals with cancer. Since assuming the role of Director of the MUHC Supportive and Palliative Care Service in 2009, he led the development of a number of supportive care clinics and services including cancer nutrition and rehabilitation, lymphedema, pain clinic, cannabis clinic and the psychosocial oncology service. In addition, he has been a strong advocate for the needs of patients at end-of-life and their

families and ensured that Medical Aid in Dying was properly instituted at the MUHC. Dr. Borod has received several awards for his clinical service including the 2014 Award for Innovation in Clinical Care or Quality, Department of Medicine, MUHC, a 2015 award from the Direction Québécoise de Cancerologie for organizing the MUHC Cancer Pain Program and the 2018 West Island Palliative Care Ina Cummings Award.



Screenshots of Dr. Eduardo Franco and Dean Eidelman with the merit award winners and their nominators: Tatjana Nistic and Jan Seuntjens (top left), Cristiano Ferrario and Victoria Mandilaras (top right), Lucy Gilbert and Luis Souhami (bottom left), Manuel Borod and Armen Aprikian (bottom right)

(iii) Lifetime Achievement Award

The Department's *Lifetime Achievement Award* was presented to **Dr. Brian Leyland-Jones**. Dr. Leyland-Jones obtained a BSc in Biochemistry and a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) from the University of London in the early 1970's. He did a clinical fellowship in the Department of Medicine at the New York Hospital and a medical oncology fellowship at Memorial Hospital in New York. In addition, he did a research fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Centre. In 2004 he completed a PhD in Molecular Pharmacology from the University of London.

In 1980 Dr. Leyland-Jones became an Assistant Attending Physician at Memorial Hospital and Clinical Affiliate at The New York Hospital. He also held an academic appointment as an Assistant Professor in Pharmacology at Cornell University. From 1983 to 1989 he held the positions of Attending Consultant Physician at the Medicine Branch of the National Institutes of Health and Head of the Developmental Chemotherapy Section, Division of Cancer Treatment of the Investigational Drug Branch of the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Maryland.

In 1989 Dr. Leyland-Jones was recruited by McGill to serve as the inaugural Chair of the newly created

Department of Oncology, a position he held between 1990 and 2000. As the Minda de Gunzburg Chair in Oncology, Dr. Leyland-Jones was responsible for taking the idea of a Department of Oncology and turning it into a fully functional and thriving unit within McGill. He built a critical mass of Department faculty members, appointing both well-established and up-and-coming clinicians and cancer researchers, strived to make the Department a unifying body for cancer activities across McGill and its affiliated hospitals, centralized oncology clinical trials paving the way for increased accrual, and played a key role in the creation of several Chairs and Fellowships for the Department. During this time, he also was a Senior Physician at the Montreal General Hospital, Royal Victoria Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital.

After completing two terms as Department Chair, Dr. Leyland-Jones remained at McGill as Professor in the Departments of Oncology and Medicine until 2007 when he returned to the US for a position as Executive Director of the Winship Cancer Institute at Emory University School of Medicine, and Associate Vice President for Health Affairs at Woodruff Health Sciences. Other positions since leaving McGill include the Director of the Edith Sanford Breast Cancer Research in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Professor in the Department of Internal Medicine at the University of South Dakota, and Vice President of Molecular Experimental Medicine at Avera Cancer Institute in Sioux Falls. He currently holds several positions including Chief Medical Officer and Board Member of the National Foundation for Cancer Research, Chief Medical Officer of OTraces, Chair, Scientific Advisory Board of NedBiosystems Inc., Chief Medical Officer of N OF 1 Mission, Chief Scientific Officer of The Darwin Foundation and Director Emeritus of the WIN Consortium.

Dr. Leyland-Jones was the Scientific Founder and Founding Chairman/CEO of Xanthus Life Sciences Inc and has served on many national and international committees and industry advisory boards. In addition, he has been Editor-in-Chief of two journals, the *Journal of Cancer Control Research* as well as *Cancer Prevention and Control* and has served on the Editorial Board of several journals.

Dr. Leyland-Jones' research focus has included genetic and proteomic biomarkers of prognosis and prediction in breast cancer, pharmacogenetics, pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics in oncological clinical trials and screening and mechanistic studies of novel targeted and chemotherapeutic anticancer agents. He has submitted 35 patents and has received research funding from granting agencies as well as contracts from industry for clinical research studies. He has given over 450 invited lectures nationally and internationally and has published 246 papers in peer-reviewed journals.



Screenshot of Dr. Eduardo Franco and Dean Eidelman with Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, Dr. Brian Leyland-Jones



Screenshot of Dr. Eduardo Franco and Dean Eidelman with the Distinguished Lecturer, award recipients and nominators