

March 26, 2021

Hi Everyone!

This week's Departmental Acknowledgement goes to **Janusz Rak** and **Jacquetta Trasler**, two of our more 'seasoned' Departmental basic scientists on the occasion of recent outstanding personal accomplishments in their scientific careers.

Janusz is an MD-PhD originally from Poland. A Professor since 2011 he holds the Jack Cole Foundation Chair in Pediatric Hematology-Oncology. A highly successful bench scientist he has focused on the elucidating the fundamental mechanisms by which tumor spread, thus increasing their devastating impact on the patient. He can take responsibility for discovering oncosomes/exosomes which are discrete vesicles released by tumors and taken up remotely, thus enabling tumor spread. Recognized as a Top 10 discovery by Quebec Science in 2008, the presence of these vesicles offer an additional mechanism for therapeutic intervention and disease modulation. The DA this week is in recognition of Janusz hitting a funding Grand Slam. He is the lead PI (with co-PIs that include fellow Department basic scientists Kolja Eppert and Nada Jabado) in a Canadian Foundation for Innovation Grant entitled; Centre for Applied Nanomedicine (CAN)-Studies into Extracellular Vesicle Heterogeneity, Biomarkers and Function. The CFI which included philanthropic support from the Montreal Children's Foundation has a robust multi-million dollar budget over 5 years. Most importantly it enables Janusz and his colleagues to continue pursuing highly promising investigative pathways that offer a good probability of a therapeutic payoff.



Jacquetta is an MDCM and PhD (pharmacology) who has focused her research career at the bench evaluating the external factors that impact on embryonic development and gametogenesis. Interestingly she has focused on the often overlooked and underappreciated paternal contribution through spermatogenesis. Over the past decade she has become an international leader in the epigenetic modifications of DNA methylation patterns that influences gene expression and plays a role in the developmental origins of adult disease. Jacquetta served our academic community from 2007-2015 as the Director of the RI-MCH and the inaugural Deputy Executive Director and Scientific Officer of the RI-MUHC. With the 2015 move of our activities to the Glen site she thus played a key role in successfully implanting the Child Health flag in the Centre for Translational Biology (CTB), Centre for Outcomes Research and Evaluation (CORE) and the Centre for Innovative Medicine (CIM) at the Glen. Our remarkable scientific success since our move to the Glen is a mark of her administrative excellence during a critical phase. Jacquetta has received multiple external awards for her scientific work and the full cycle of FRQ-S external salary support awards including a Chercheur Nationale. She has also been named by the University a William Dawson Scholar and subsequently a James McGill Professor. The DA this week is for being named a Distinguished James McGill Professor, which recognizes a late-career scholar's sustained scholarship of world-class caliber and



international leadership akin to that of a Canada Research Chair (CRC) Tier 1 Award. Of note, the award continues until retirement upon which Emeritus status is granted.

Have a great weekend everyone and Chag Sameach to all those marking the liberation story and holiday of Passover that commences Saturday evening.

Michael

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