COMMENTARY

2016 AGA Institute Council Section Research Mentor Awardees

Each year, Digestive Disease Week (DDW) brings together the best clinical, translational, and basic science in the field. It is also an opportunity for many trainees and young investigators to present their work, receive advice from senior investigators, and build their professional networks. At DDW 2016, the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) recognized 1 member each from 10 Council sections who have committed themselves to training these young investigators and have shown a track record of outstanding research mentorship. Cellular and Molecular Gastroenterology and Hepatology extends our appreciation to the awardees in each section for providing guidance and mentorship to the next generation of researchers.

Cellular and Molecular Gastroenterology (CMG) Section: James R. Goldenring, MD, PhD, AGAF

James Goldenring received his AB degree from Harvard College and his MD and PhD degrees from Yale University. After residency training in general surgery from 1986 to 1988 at Yale New Haven Hospital, he completed a post-doctoral fellowship in surgical research as an American College of Surgeons Research Fellow. Dr Goldenring was one of the founding members of the Institute of Molecular Medicine at the Medical College of Georgia. Dr Goldenring is presently the Paul Sanger Professor of Surgery and Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology and Co-Director of the Epithelial Biology Center at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Dr Goldenring’s research spans multiple topics across the broad area of epithelial biology. He has been a leader in the investigation of the specific roles of Rab small guanosine triphosphatases in regulating vesicle trafficking and membrane recycling in polarized cells. Most recently, Dr Goldenring has studied aberrant membrane trafficking in the context of neonatal congenital diarrhea diseases, especially in microvillus inclusion disease and MYO5B knockout mice. Finally, Dr Goldenring has been a leader in the field of gastric cancer research, studying the mechanisms responsible for the induction of metaplasia. His recent studies have suggested that targeting Ras activation may be an effective approach for reversing metaplasia in the stomach. Dr Goldenring is currently the Associate Editor of Cellular and Molecular Gastroenterology and Hepatology and previously was the Associate Editor of the American Journal of Physiology—Gastrointestinal & Liver Physiology.

Esophageal, Gastric and Duodenal Disorders (EGD) Section: John E. Pandolfino, MD, MSCI, AGAF

John Pandolfino is a Professor of Medicine and Chief of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University. His career has focused primarily on studying the biomechanics of bolus transport and gastrointestinal motility as it pertains to gastroesophageal reflux and swallowing disorders. He currently is funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study gastroesophageal reflux disease and dysphagia pathogenesis and also receives funding from industry focused on the development of new technologies to investigate and treat gastrointestinal disorders. He also maintains a strong clinical practice in the Esophageal Center at Northwestern, which serves as the nation’s top referral center for complicated esophageal diseases. He is active in multiple professional organizations and has a strong commitment to the editorial process, serving as the Editor-in-Chief of Diseases of the Esophagus, Associate Editor of the American Journal of Gastroenterology, and as a member of the editorial board of multiple high-level gastroenterology and hepatology journals.

Gastrointestinal Oncology (GIONC) Section: John M. Carethers, MD, AGAF

John Carethers received his MD from Wayne State University, finished his internal medicine residency at Massachusetts General Hospital, and completed his gastroenterology fellowship at the University of Michigan. Dr Carethers joined the faculty at the University of California (UC) San Diego where he became
Chief of the Division of Gastroenterology, Director of the NIH T32 Gastroenterology Training Grant, and Founding Director of the UC San Diego Digestive Disease Research Development Center. In 2009, Dr Carethers moved to the University of Michigan, where he is the John G. Searle Professor and Chair of the Department of Internal Medicine. His previous editorial experience includes serving on several editorial boards, including the American Journal of Physiology—Gastrointestinal & Liver Physiology, as well serving as section editor of “This Month in Gastroenterology” for Gastroenterology (2006–2011) and as Senior Associate Editor for Gastroenterology (2011–2016). His research interests are in gastroenterology oncology, particularly the genetics and pathogenesis of colorectal cancer; familial colorectal cancer; and cancer disparities related to colorectal cancer. He was elected to the National Academy of Medicine in 2012 and the American Association of Arts and Sciences in 2016.

**Growth, Development and Child Health (GDCH) Section: Samuel Nurko, MD, MPH**

Samuel Nurko is Chief of the Center for Motility and Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders at Boston Children’s Hospital and Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School. Dr Nurko was born and raised in Mexico City, where he completed his medical education at the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico. He completed his pediatric residency at Boston City Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital, and completed his fellowship in pediatric gastroenterology at Boston Children’s Hospital, where he created the Center for Motility and Functional Bowel Disorders. The Center not only provides state-of-the-art care and evaluation for children with motility and functional bowel disorders, but has a well-funded research base, as well as a well-defined educational component that allows the training of the next generation of pediatric gastrointestinal (GI) motility specialists. Dr Nurko has distinguished himself during his long tenure as an academic, NIH-funded clinical researcher, teacher, mentor, and expert in motility and functional disorders of the gastrointestinal tract in children. He is a recognized leader in the field and has participated in many national and international committees and task forces, including being the Chair of the Neonatal/Toddler Rome IV Committee. Dr Nurko has made major contributions to the understanding of motility and functional GI disorders in children. His clinical and research interests have focused on understanding the pathophysiology and establishing the best approach and treatments for these disorders, and he has been a pioneer in the development and validation of new techniques to study these disorders in the pediatric population.

**Imaging and Advanced Technology (IAT) Section: William R. Brugge, MD, AGAF, FASGE**

William Brugge is a teacher-clinician in the GI Unit at Massachusetts General Hospital. Dr Brugge’s academic and research focus involves the field of advanced endoscopy and he was one of the pioneers in the development of endoscopic ultrasound (EUS). Although EUS originally was designed to simply stage gastrointestinal malignancies, it has evolved into an important diagnostic and therapeutic technique for endoscopists. The application of EUS in the diagnosis, staging, and biopsy of pancreatic malignancies has been a particularly important focus for Dr Brugge, and he has concentrated on the diagnosis and management of pancreatic cystic neoplasms. Dr Brugge led a large multicenter trial, finding that EUS imaging morphology and cyst cytology were relatively nondiagnostic for differentiating between mucinous and serous cystadenomas. The trial showed that cyst fluid tumor markers were the most diagnostic tool and carcinoembryonic antigen was the most accurate marker. Dr Brugge also has examined the possibility that EUS could be used as a treatment of cystic neoplasms. EUS-guided ethanol ablation of cystic neoplasms was developed at Massachusetts General Hospital under his direction. In addition to performing endoscopic research in patients, Dr Brugge evaluates new ablative technologies in an animal laboratory, using endoscopic ultrasound to guide various ablative catheters and agents into the pancreas. Dr Brugge’s group has evaluated radiofrequency ablation, photodynamic therapy, ethanol, and chemotherapeutic agents. Lately, they have evaluated confocal endomicroscopy for differentiating between mucinous and nonmucinous cysts.

**Immunology, Microbiology and Inflammatory Bowel Diseases (IMIBD) Section: William J. Sandborn, MD, AGAF**

William Sandborn completed medical school and an internal medicine residency at Loma Linda University in Loma Linda, California. He completed a gastroenterology fellowship at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota in 1993. From 1993 to 2010, he was on the faculty of the Mayo Clinic, rising to Professor of Medicine, Vice Chairman of the Division of Gastroenterology and
Hepatology, and Associate Dean of Research for Intellectual Property and Industry Relations. In 2011, he became a Professor of Medicine and Adjunct Professor of Surgery at the University of California San Diego and Director of the IBD Center and Chief of the Division of Gastroenterology for the UC San Diego Health System. He is a member of the UC San Diego Health System Board of Governors and the Clinical Practice Operations Board (which oversees the clinical practice for the entire UC San Diego Health System). Dr Sandborn has published more than 569 peer-reviewed articles including articles in the New England Journal of Medicine, Nature, Lancet, Journal of the American Medical Association, Annals of Internal Medicine, and Gastroenterology. His h-index is 105. His research interests are clinical trials and clinical pharmacology related to inflammatory bowel disease.

**Intestinal Disorders (ID) Section: Kim E. Barrett, PhD, AGAF**

Kim Barrett, a native of the United Kingdom, obtained her BSc and PhD degrees from the Department of Chemistry at University College London. After a postdoctoral fellowship at the National Institutes of Health, she joined the faculty of UC San Diego School of Medicine in 1985, and rose to the rank of Professor of Medicine in 1996, and Distinguished Professor of Medicine in 2015. Her research interests center on the normal and abnormal biology of the intestinal epithelium and their relevance to a variety of digestive diseases including inflammatory bowel diseases, infectious diarrheal diseases, and peptic ulcer disease. She has received a number of honors for her research, including the Bawditch and Davenport Lectureships of the American Physiological Society, the Bayliss-Starling Prize Lectureship from the Physiological Society of the United Kingdom and Ireland, and the degree of Doctor of Medical Science, honoris causa, from Queens University Belfast. She has been highly active in professional societies and in scholarly editing, and is a Past President of the American Physiological Society and the current Editor-in-Chief of The Journal of Physiology. She has served on numerous committees for the AGA, including as an elected member of the AGA Institute Council and a member of the Governing Board. She is the author or editor of several books and monographs (including 2 editions of the textbook, “Gastrointestinal Physiology,” which also has been translated into Spanish and Portuguese), and more than 200 peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and reviews. In 2006, she was appointed as Dean of the Graduate Division at the University of California San Diego. In this capacity, she serves as a member of the senior academic management team and oversees the recruitment, academic advancement, and climate for more than 5000 masters and doctoral students.

**Neurogastroenterology and Motility (NGM) Section: Jackie D. Wood, PhD, AGAF, RFF**

Jackie Wood is a professor in the Department of Physiology and Cell Biology and in the Department of Internal Medicine at the Ohio State University College of Medicine. He received his doctorate in 1969 from the Department of Physiology and Biophysics at the University of Illinois and was appointed as an Assistant Professor at the University of Kansas School of Medicine and Medical Center in 1971, and promoted to Professor in 1979. He was appointed as Professor and Chairman in the Department of Physiology of the University of Nevada School of Medicine from 1979 to 1985, and Professor and Chairman in the Department of Physiology and Professor of Internal Medicine in the Ohio State University College of Medicine in 1985–1997. Dr Wood was inducted as a Fellow of the AGA in 2006. Dr Wood’s honors and awards include the following: NIH Career Development Award; Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship, Germany; University of Kansas Chancellor’s Award (1975: $1000) for Excellence in Teaching; Professor-of-the-Year Award, Medical Class of 1983, University of Nevada School of Medicine; The Ohio State University College of Medicine Excellence in Teaching Award; Honorary Citizen of the City of Atsugi, Japan; Distinguished Lecturer, World Congress of Gastroenterology, Sydney, Australia; Distinguished Faculty Appointment to the World Congress of Gastroenterology, Los Angeles, CA; and a merit award (2008: $10,000) for excellence in research and teaching in the Ohio State University College of Medicine. Dr Wood also is a Honorary Professor of Pharmacology at Weifang Medical University, China.

**Obesity, Metabolism and Nutrition (OMN) Section: Patrick Tso, PhD**

Patrick Tso is a distinguished career investigator who has mentored numerous predoctoral and postdoctoral trainees, as well as several clinical fellows, and has inspired many to go on as successful independent researchers. He is the Mary Emery Professor of Pathology at the University of Cincinnati. Dr Tso’s highly successful career there has included positions such as the Director of the NIH-funded Cincinnati Mouse Metabolic Phenotyping Center and Director of the Center for Lipid Research for 6 years. He was the recipient of the Daniel Drake Medal, the highest honor bestowed to a faculty at the College of Medicine. Dr Tso’s
research has focused on the mechanism of the assembly and secretion of chylomicrons. His seminal work on apolipoprotein A-IV defined important roles for this gut protein. He also has studied the role of gut inflammatory factors induced by lipid absorption that may contribute to insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome. His most recent work involves defining the role and mechanisms of the regulation of chylomicron formation and secretion by apolipoprotein A-V. He has been funded continuously by the NIH since the early 1980s with multiple R01 grants, as well as participation in NIH Study Sections and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases Advisory Council. Dr Tso’s love of teaching, patience, and infectious enthusiasm over discoveries in the laboratory inspired many to pursue a successful NIH-funded research career with various aspects of gastrointestinal physiology. He is a highly successful and productive basic scientist and he has distinguished himself especially as a consummate mentor of predoctoral and postdoctoral trainees, especially young physician scientists, which represent an “endangered species.”

Pancreatic Disorders (PAN) Section: David C. Whitcomb, MD, PhD, AGAF

David Whitcomb is the Giant Eagle Professor of Cancer Genetics; Professor of Medicine, Cell Biology & Physiology and Human Genetics; and Chief of the Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr Whitcomb has dedicated his career to helping patients with pancreatic diseases. With more than 2 decades of continuous funding from the NIH, Dr Whitcomb assembled effective teams of multidisciplinary physicians and scientists for basic, translational, and clinical research. He developed paradigm-shifting models including equation-based models for pancreatic duct fluid secretion, TIGAR-O, sentinel acute pancreatitis event, clinical models for personalized medicine, and the Matrix Academic division. As world leaders in pancreas genetics, his team discovered PRSS1 in hereditary pancreatitis, CLD2 in alcoholic pancreatitis, and PALLD in pancreatic cancer. He founded the North American Pancreatic Study Group to conduct North American Pancreatic Study, PancreasFest to facilitate multi-institute cooperation, and Collaborative Alliance for Pancreatic Education and Research to support your physician scientists.

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