

Margaret Ellen Nielsen Fellowship

In recognition of the high esteem that they hold for Dr. Victor McKusick, Dr. Terry Taylor and his wife Julia have established The Margaret Ellen Nielsen Fellowship, in memory of their grand daughter who was born on November 14, 1990 in Kingston, New York. Shortly after birth, Margaret was diagnosed with Down syndrome, and she died while undergoing heart surgery 11 months later.

The funds from the fellowship are intended to assist genetic trainees studying in the McKusick-Nathans Institute of Genetic Medicine. This Fellowship provides the recipient in the first year of clinical training with funds to attend the Annual Short Course on Medical and Experimental Mammalian Genetics (founded in 1960 by Dr. McKusick) in Bar Harbor, Maine.

Dr. McKusick began his career by studying heart defects, but rapidly developed an interest in the inherited components of diseases. In 1957 he founded the Division of Medical Genetics at Johns Hopkins and, in 1966, created the first edition of the genetic reference "Mendelian Inheritance in Man," a compilation of inherited disease genes. Today the online version (OMIM) is the largest annotated database of human genes and genetic disorders. It is authored and edited by Dr. McKusick and his colleagues both at Johns Hopkins University and elsewhere. A scientist as well as a prominent clinician, Dr. McKusick received a National Medal of Science June 13, 2002.

Both donors are Hopkins Alumni. Mrs. Taylor graduated from The Johns Hopkins School of Nursing in 1960, while Dr. Taylor graduated from The Johns Hopkins Medical School the same year. Dr. Taylor is a board certified ophthalmologist, who attended the Bar Harbor Annual Short Course in 1970 and again in 2004 at Dr. McKusick's invitation. He is acutely interested in the field of medical genetics and maintains close ties with Dr. McKusick and an interest in the progress of the trainees he endows.

Past Recipients

2003-2004 Douglas Riegert-Johnson, MD

Dr. Riegert attended medical school at the University of Alabama School of Medicine. He completed his internal medicine residency training at the Mayo Clinic, in Rochester MN. During his medical genetics training his research interests included stiff skin syndrome and congenital disorders of glycosylation. Dr. Riegert graduated from the IGM Medical Genetics Residency in 2005. He has returned to the Mayo Clinic to pursue a Fellowship in gastroenterology.

2004-2005 Reem Saadeh, MD

Dr. Saadeh is in her 3rd year of training in the medical genetics residency program. Her research mentor is Julie Hoover-Fong, MD. Her project title is: Recruitment of albino and developmentally delayed patients from the IGM database to identify the prevalence of Prader-Willi and Angelman syndrome in the albino population. Dr. Saadeh's expected date of graduation is August 30, 2007.

2005-2006 Veronica Mardo, MD

Veronica Mardo began the IGM medical genetics residency program July 1st, 2005 and was named the Margaret Ellen Nielsen Fellow. She is currently in her second year of training. Veronica's expected date of graduation is June 30, 2007.

Congratulations

Award Recipient 2006

Hilary Vernon, MD, PhD

In January of 2004 Hilary Vernon completed her PhD in Molecular Genetics from Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ and in May of that year graduated from the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, UMDNJ, Piscataway, NJ.

Hilary plans to pursue a career as an academic clinician in pediatric genetics. She has been involved in genetics based research since she was a sophomore in college. As an undergraduate her research included a genome mapping project at the National Human Genome Research Institute and a deletion mapping project at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Furthermore, while in medical school she pursued a lizard population study in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey and a cytogenetics study at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. Her Ph.D. and postdoctoral work was in kidney stone diseases. "Genetics is the most fascinating branch of research" says Hilary, "and is at the root of so many pediatric diseases. It is the perfect research branch with which to combine clinical and research medicine."

Hilary joined the combined Pediatric/Medical genetics residency in July 2005. She is spending the first 18 months of her training in pediatrics. She commences her clinical genetics rotations in January 2007. Her expected date of graduation is June 30, 2010.

Reception Agenda

- ❖ *Introductions and Welcome by Dr. Garry Cutting*
- ❖ *Special Announcement by Dr. Cutting*
- ❖ *Announcement of Fellowship recipient 2006-2007 by Dr. and Mrs. Taylor*
- ❖ *Thank-you by Hilary Vernon*
- ❖ *Presentation to Dr. McKusick by Dr. and Mrs. Taylor*
- ❖ *Thank-you to the Taylor Family by Dr. McKusick*
- ❖ *Photographs*
- ❖ *Reception*