2007 Awards for Meritorious Contributions to Neuropathology

The Award for Meritorious Contributions to Neuropathology recognizes a member who has made significant contributions to the advancement of knowledge in neuropathology and provided service to the American Association of Neuropathologists. The qualities of outstanding scientific achievement and service are embodied in the 2007 recipients, Drs. James M. Powers and Cedric S. Raine.

The American Association of Neuropathologists (AANP) has awarded many, many meritorious service honors through the years to distinguished and deserving members, but few have embodied the essence of what the AANP stands for more than James Michael Powers. His scholarly contributions to neuropathology encompass investigative neuroscience, diagnosis, and teaching, and he has held every office and served on virtually every committee that the Association has to offer.

Jim Powers was born in Cleveland, Ohio on September 15, 1943, to Irish-American and German-American parents. He owes his gift for speaking and writing to his father and his critical thinking skills to his mother. He grew up in New York City, graduating from Cathedral Preparatory High School. Under that veneer of toughness honed in New York City during his early life is a person with a big heart—willing to help not only his friends but anyone truly in need.

He was awarded his bachelor’s degree with a major in biology from Manhattan College and his MD degree from the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston. He stayed at South Carolina for his anatomic pathology training and then migrated back to New York for neuropathology training at Albert Einstein College of Medicine under Robert Terry. It was at Einstein, immersed in that strong neuropathology culture, that he formed 2-way streets of influence with Terry, Cedric Raine, Herb Schauberg, Dik Horoupian, Bernardino Ghetti, Kuniko Suzuki, Mauro Dal Canto, Henryk Wisniewski, and others, developing a career-long interest and expertise in cerebral amyloid and demyelinating diseases.

After his training at Einstein, Jim accepted his first faculty position at South Carolina and remained there for 15 years (1973–1988). He worked with Doug Balentine there and continued his interest in diseases of myelin, especially adrenoleukodystrophy (ALD). In 1988, Jim returned to New York once again, this time as Professor and Director of Neuropathology and Vice-Chair of the Department of Pathology at College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University. He has been Professor and Director of Neuropathology at the University of Rochester since 1992. Through all these positions, Jim has sustained his interest in, and contributions to, demyelinating diseases. Perhaps his most important discovery was that of the adrenal lesions in Schilder disease, thus changing people’s thinking about the disease and leading to the new designation of ALD (Shaumberg et al, 1972).

With the appreciation that ALD is a peroxisomal disorder, Jim’s research blossomed further and was enhanced, but not overshadowed, by collaborations with the late Hugo Moser and Salvatore DiMauro, and, more recently, with Kirby Smith and Marjo van der Knaap. He has written seminal papers on ALD, Zellweger syndrome, cerebral amyloidosis, mitochondrial encephalopathies, and vanishing white matter disease. He gave his presidential address to the AANP in 1993 on peroxisomal disorders.

Jim has published 180 peer-reviewed scientific papers, 39 book chapters and manuals, and has delivered 35 invited speeches and 7 testimonials. He has won 5 teaching awards and has trained, or helped train, 9 neuropathologists. He has won the AANP’s Moore Award for the best clinicopathologic paper at the annual meeting a record 4 times (2 for his amyloid studies and 2 for his ALD studies) and delivered the Saul Korey Lecture at the AANP annual meeting in Cleveland in 2004. Jim has contributed immensely to the science and overall health of the AANP through his service as Assistant Secretary-Treasurer (1976 and 1980–85), Secretary-Treasurer (1985–88), Vice President (1989–90), Vice President for Professional Affairs (1989–92), and President (1993–94). He has served on the editorial boards of 8 scientific journals, including the JNEN board twice (1984–89 and 2000–06) and served as a councilor of the International Society of Neuropathologists.

James Powers

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Cedric S. Raine, PhD, DSci, Professor of Pathology (Neuropathology), Neuroscience, and Neurology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, is a longtime member and past president (1992–1993) of the American Association of Neuropathologists. He is receiving the Meritorious Service Award today in recognition of his pioneering work in the field of neuroimmunology and, in particular, for his studies of human multiple sclerosis (MS) and experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis (EAE). He has made numerous contributions to our understanding of MS, particularly with respect to defining the nature of the inflammatory response in demyelinating diseases. Today, the majority of his work is targeted toward the molecular and immunologic analysis of the MS plaque and the testing of therapeutic strategies in EAE.

Cedric was born in Eastbourne, England, and did his undergraduate work at King’s College, University of Durham. He then enrolled in the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, where he entered the laboratory of E. J. Field. His initial work was on what we now call prion diseases, particularly their ultrastructural aspects, but he soon shifted his interests to MS, the subject that was to remain his life-long interest. Upon completion of his PhD in Medicine (Neuropathology) in 1967, Cedric made what, in retrospect, was certainly a momentous decision: to move across the Atlantic and to do his postdoctoral fellowship in neuropathology under Bob Terry at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx, New York. Although he must surely have suffered something of a culture shock, the move seemed to agree with him, and he has never left. In those early years, he established numerous collaborations and friendships not only with Terry but with Dik Horoupian, Jim Powers, John Prineas, Henry Wisniewski, and others, and quickly rose through the academic ranks to become professor. Somewhere along the way, he also acquired a second doctorate from Newcastle, his DSc Medicine (Neuropathology), in 1975.

Over the years, Cedric has authored hundreds of papers, chapters, and books. He founded the Journal of Neuroimmunology in 1980, and he continues to serve as its Editor-in-Chief. He is also Founding President of the International Society of Neuroimmunology, serving from 1987 to 2001. His list of honors and awards over the years is impressive. Of note, the first award listed in his CV was his 1969 Weil Award from the AANP. He garnered another Weil Award in 1975 and a Moore Award in 1976. Other highlights over the years include a Founders’ Research Award from the New York City Chapter of the MS Society (1984–1986), a Javits Neuroscience Investigator Award (1985–1992), election to Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists (1988), the Wollowick Family Professorship in Multiple Sclerosis at Albert Einstein College of Medicine (1993), the John Jay Dystel Prize for MS Research from the American Academy of Neurology and the National MS Society (1996), a Doctoris Honoris Causa from the University of Lodz (2000), and an Achievement Award from the Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers (2005).

Through it all—the honors, the papers, the invited speeches—what has been most characteristic of Cedric is his genuine excitement about his research. He simply loves to do experiments, not just to prove a point, but to find something new. It is truly the joy of the hunt that has sustained him. Along the way, he has been a great mentor to legions of trainees and has inspired many young investigators to take up their own productive careers in MS research. He demands a lot from the people he works with, but he also gives back, instilling tremendous loyalty among the people in his lab and his friends and colleagues in neuropathology. People stay with him for years and years—his long-time collaborators, Celia Brosnan and Barbara Cannella; his technicians; and the people in his office. He is an understanding boss,
whose willingness to let people arrange their days to accommodate family responsibilities is much appreciated, and he always brings back presents for the lab when he returns from a trip. Ever the microscopist, even after hours, Cedric is an avid collector of old and antique microscopes, as well as clocks and coins.

No tribute to Cedric would be complete without a few comments about his incredibly dry sense of humor. His lab can always tell when he’s arrived in the morning, as he makes his presence known in his own inimitable way. At meetings, he’s always ready to join his friends in the bar and regale them with stories, “the funniest I’ve ever heard,” and he’s taught more than one the words to “The Blaydon Races.” May he continue to grace the AANP meetings (and of course the post-meetings) for many more years to come.

Barbara J. Crain