

Media Release – Australia: Feb 4, 2009

Australia-Harvard Fellowships for 2009 announced

SUMMARY

An acclaimed physics educator, an honoured researcher in regenerative biology, and an Alzheimer's-focused pathologist are among six winners of the 2009 Australia-Harvard Fellowships announced this week by Harvard Club of Australia Foundation (HCA F). This year's list of new fellows includes: [Eric Mazur](#), Balkanski Professor of Physics and Applied Physics, School of Engineering & Applied Sciences; [Andrew P McMahon](#), Frank B Baird Jr. Professor of Science, FAS Dept of Stem Cell & Regenerative Biology; [Harald Jueppner](#), M.D., Professor of Pediatrics at HMS and head of Mass. General's Endocrine Unit; [Robert D Moir](#), PhD, assist. prof. and instructor at HMS Dept of Neurology, [Steven W Lockley](#), PhD, assist. prof. at HMS Div. of Sleep Medicine, and [Kavi Bhalla](#), PhD, research scientist at Harvard School of Public Health.

Two of the new fellows, Professors Mazur and McMahon, were successful applicants previously but had to withdraw due to individual academic commitments at the time.

The fellowships support learned exchange between Harvard University and Australia through collaboration with senior Australian research organisations. In effect, HCA F donates to the Australian institutions, which then administer the funds on HCA F's behalf. Each award is usually sufficient to fund a successful applicant for a visit to Australia of up to three months. Applications for 2010 fellowships will close in September 2009.

+++++

Media contact:

John Turner
Australia-Harvard Fellowship Secretary
Harvard Club of Australia Foundation

T: +61 2 9328 2366

E: ahf@harvard.org.au

FELLOWSHIP DETAILS

Professor Eric Mazur is renowned for innovations in physics education. His *Peer Instruction* program is described as “truly revolutionary”. He will make two visits, the first to ANU in March where he will conduct hands-on workshops, discuss assessment practices, set up a joint research program with the Physics Education Research Group and also visit southern states’ university educators. As well, he will interact with ANU faculty programs in optics and ultra-fast lasers. His second visit in September will review progress in implementing *Peer Instruction* methods and conduct a similar program for faculty members from Queensland universities.

Professor Andrew McMahon is a founding member of Harvard’s Stem Cell Institute. His acclaim may be judged by his election to fellowships of the Royal Society UK and of several US equivalents and that he is named on 17 US patents. His expertise is in genetic approaches to human developmental programs. In March-April, he plans intensive visits to four major research and education centres (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide) to give a series of lectures about Harvard’s work on developmental and regenerative biology in basic and biomedical research. He seeks to engage Australia’s scientists about potential collaborative programs with HSCI / DSCRB, and forge research ties with institutions and universities here. Principal collaborators will be **Professors Patrick Tam**, CMRI Westmead and **Peter Koopman** and **Melissa Little**, University of Queensland.

Professor Harald Jueppner will continue his collaborative research with **Dr Steven Alexander**, MPH (Harvard), Head of Kidney Research at Westmead Children’s Hospital in February-March. Their focus is on renal diseases caused by different underlying genetic diseases in NSW families with known but undiagnosed genetic disorders. This has the potential for the discovery of new genes with relevance not only to these families but also in our understanding of biology and disease. As well, Professor Jueppner will undertake faculty discussions, lectures, facilities visits and training initiatives at Westmead and variously at the Garvan Institute, University of Melbourne, and University of Queensland.

Dr Robert Moir’s special focus is a peptide that forms the key protein in the pathology of Alzheimer’s Disease. Beginning mid-year, he will collaborate with **Ashley Bush**, Professor of Pathology at University of Melbourne. Professor Bush is a pioneering researcher in Alzheimer’s working under a ARC Federation Fellowship at Melbourne’s Mental Health Research Institute with Professor Colin Masters. Apart from developing synergies between MHRI and his laboratory at Harvard Medical School, Dr Moir’s visit will allow a big push on difficult collaborative projects

in drug development for Alzheimer's and fertilise additional research by knowledge-exchange, including exchanging students between Harvard and University of Melbourne.

Dr Steven Lockley has an appointment as Honorary Associate Professor at Monash University's School of Psychology. When he visits his chief collaborating researcher, **Dr Shantha Rajaratnam** for two months starting in October, he will have two main roles. One is teaching courses in Bach. of Behavioural Neuroscience and BSc. involving drugs, brain and altered awareness and "integrative neuroscience" plus deliver a lecture series to honours and post-grad. students in the Sleep & Chronobiology Research Program. The other role is to contribute to Monash projects such as characterising sleep and circadian rhythm disruptions, and investigating the effects of extended work hours on sleep, alertness and performance of medical interns. This will include working with **Professor Ron Grunstein** (USyd) and the Australasian Sleep Trials Network, and collaborating with **Dr Greg Murray** of Swinburne Institute of Technology.

Dr Kavi Bhalla heads a section of the *Harvard Initiative for Global Health*. It is part of an international program, conducted by a consortium of universities and the W.H.O., which is building a statistical framework for road traffic injury metrics in developing countries, under the umbrella of the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study. Dr Bhalla intends two one-month long visits to collaborate with **Professor James Harrison** of Flinders University's School of Medicine. He directs the Research Centre for Injury Studies (RCIS) which operates the National Injury Surveillance Unit of the Australian Institute of Health & Welfare. Each visit will result in academic publications. One of their aims will be to reclassify ill-defined causes of death categories in existing registration data and to identify methods for grouping the data for improved analysis. Another aim is to apply GBD methods developed for handling multi-trauma to real world data from developing countries, then test with **Dr Belinda Gabbe** of Monash University how well the proposed methods perform. None of this expert group, including Dr Bhalla, derives any salary from GBD.

End