

Keystone Symposia Hails 2011 Nobel Prize Winners

Keystone Symposia congratulates the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine winners, Ralph M. Steinman, Bruce A. Beutler and Jules A. Hoffmann, announced Monday, October 3, 2011, and extends condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of winner Dr. Steinman, who passed away Friday, September 30, three days before he could learn of his award.

Dr. Steinman of Rockefeller University was an active speaker, organizer and Scientific Advisory Board member for Keystone Symposia over the past two decades, most recently presenting at Keystone Symposia's meeting in Seattle in October 2010 on "Immunological Mechanisms of Vaccination," as well as the February 2011 joint conferences in Santa Fe on "Dendritic Cells and the Initiation of Adaptive Immunity" and "Cancer Control by Tumor Suppressors and Immune Effectors." In fact, he founded Keystone Symposia's meetings on Dendritic Cells, which have been held roughly bi-annually since 1995 when he co-organized the first one with Dr. Jacques Banchereau. Dr. Steinman also helped originate the short talk concept that is now an integral part of virtually all Keystone Symposia meeting programs.

He won half the Prize for his discovery of the dendritic cell and its role in adaptive immunity. The other half is shared by Bruce Beutler of the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California and Jules Hoffmann of the Institute of Cellular and Molecular Biology in Strasbourg, France for discoveries concerning the activation of innate immunity. Drs. Beutler and Hoffman have also organized and spoken at a variety of Keystone Symposia meetings. Dr. Beutler co-organized the October 2010 "Immunological Mechanisms of Vaccination" conference and Dr. Hoffman co-organized one of our first Innate Immunity meetings in 2002.

Their combined discoveries have led to ground-breaking new research into infectious disease immunology, as well as immunotherapy and vaccine development for treatment of cancer.

Dr. David Woodland, an immunologist who will become Keystone Symposia's new Chief Scientific Officer October 31, commented on the award announcement. "These three scientists are thoroughly deserving of the Nobel Prize. Their fundamental discoveries on the workings of the immune system form the underpinnings of modern immune therapies against cancer, infection and autoimmunity. I am deeply saddened that Dr. Ralph Steinman, a personal friend and colleague, died before learning that he was awarded this great honor."