



Canadian Gene Cure Foundation
Foundation Canadienne Gène Cure

Dr. Philippe Gros Honoured as a 2011 Champion of Genetics

July 25, 2011, Victoria BC - The Canadian Gene Cure Foundation (CGCF), a national, charitable foundation committed to enabling Canadians to lead the world in the discovery and advancement of cures for inherited diseases, has honoured Dr. Philippe Gros by naming him a 2011 Champion of Genetics.

The Champion of Genetics award recognizes the scientific excellence of Canada's most respected and successful senior genetic scientists. Canadian scientists are world leaders in human genetic research and gene discovery. They have been credited with discovering genes related to hundreds of inherited, gene related diseases such as cystic fibrosis, juvenile diabetes, muscular dystrophy, Huntington's, Alzheimer's, breast cancer, colon cancer and cardiovascular disease.

This year, the (CGCF) Champions of Genetics nominating committee is honouring Dr. Philippe Gros, along with four other scientists, for the role they played in establishing the dynamic Canadian Genetic Disease Network. The Network is one of Canada's successful and highly productive Networks of Centres of Excellence that has transformed the culture of genetic science from one of isolation to one of cooperation. It has an impressive array of scientific accomplishments including the discovery of more than 50 medically significant genes and development of state-of-the-art research facilities and biotechnology companies. The Network has also led to the formation of a charitable legacy, the Canadian Gene Cure Foundation, which continues the role of supporting Canadian scientists and their contributions to human genetics research.

Dr. Gros is one of the early champions of genetics who paved the way for genetic research in Canada and played a key role in the development of the Canadian Genetic Disease Network. He is also being honoured for his pioneering work using mouse models to discover genes, proteins and pathways that play an important role in complex human diseases. His team focuses on infectious disease, including tuberculosis and malaria, multi-drug resistance in cancer and neural tube defects such as spina bifida.

To be honoured a Champion of Genetics, scientists must also have demonstrated a history of mentorship. "Despite being a highly prolific published researcher with many awards for his accomplishments, Dr. Gros always has time to encourage his students. He has lit the spark of scientific investigation in many young minds by empowering them to follow their ideas," says Dr. Anny Fortin, CGCF board member.

As part of the honour of being named a Champion of Genetics, Dr. Gros was given the opportunity to nominate an individual he has personally mentored to apply for a \$90,000 Champions of Genetics: Building the Next Generation Research Grant. The grant will provide much needed funding for the chosen young scientists to advance their own

exciting genetic research and discoveries and to mentor yet the next generation of scientists; thus perpetuating Canada's level of excellence in genetic research.

"It is a wonderful honour and privilege to be one of the first recipients of the "Champions of Genetics" awards from the CGCF. I have spent my entire career working in the field of genetics and have had the privilege to be involved in the conquering of many complex problems including; resistance to chemotherapy, defects in development of the nervous system and susceptibility to infections." Dr. Gros said. "I am honoured to be named a Champion of Genetics, but it is genetics in fact that is the real "Champion". I have simply been fortunate to work in the field of genetics for many years and have had the opportunity to accomplish many wonderful things."

The Canadian Gene Cure Foundation recently honoured Dr. Gros and four other Champions of Genetics at the Canadian Human Genetics Conference in Banff, Alberta. Sharing this honour with Dr. Gros were:

Dr. Michael Hayden, Killam Professor of Medical Genetics, Canada Research Chair in Human Genetics and Molecular Medicine, and Director of the Centre for Molecular Medicine and Therapeutics at the University of British Columbia;

Dr. Robert Korneluk, Director of the Solange Gauthier Karsh Laboratory and Director of the Apoptosis Research Centre at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and a Professor in both the Department of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Ottawa; and

Dr. Roderick McInnes, Director of the Lady Davis Institute of the Jewish General Hospital, Canada Research Chair in Neurogenetics, and Professor of Genetics and of Biochemistry at McGill University.

Dr. Brenda Gallie, Professor in the Departments of Medical Biophysics, Molecular and Medical Genetics, and Ophthalmology at the University of Toronto and the Hospital for Sick Children and Senior Scientist in the Division of Applied Molecular Oncology at the Ontario Cancer Institute at Princess Margaret Hospital.

Dr. Philippe Gros is a Professor of Biochemistry and Director of the Complex Traits Program at McGill University.

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Background:

About the Canadian Gene Cure Foundation:

The Canadian Gene Cure Foundation (CGCF) is a registered Canadian charitable organization, formed in 1999 to raise much-needed funds for medical genetics research in Canada.

The Foundation's primary goal is to raise funds to enable Canadian scientists to discover cures and treatments for inherited diseases. In addition to the annual research grants awarded, the Foundation recognizes the importance of mentoring Canada's future scientists and hosts the annual Gene Researcher for a Week program aimed at providing unique educational opportunities for high school students across the country. The Foundation also supports networking opportunities in which scientists can exchange ideas and work cooperatively, linking advances in different disease areas. Specifically, the CGCF supports the annual Canadian Human Genetics Conference in partnership with the CIHR Institute of Genetics.

Canadian scientists are world-leaders in gene discovery and genetic research and have discovered genes relating to hundreds of disorders, including cystic fibrosis, juvenile diabetes, muscular dystrophy, dyslexia, Huntington disease, Alzheimer's disease, breast cancer, colon cancer, cardiovascular disease and epilepsy. Through active fundraising, the Canadian Gene Cure Foundation can continue to support Canadian Scientists and their contributions to human genetics research.

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