The Jeffrey M. Isner, M.D.
Endowed Memorial Lectureship

Distinguished Guest Lecturers

2006 - Douglas Losordo, M.D.
Chief, Cardiovascular Research, Professor of Medicine, Tufts University School of Medicine
“The microvasculature as a therapeutic target in ischemic disease”

2007 - Judah Folkman, M.D.
Director, Vascular Biology Program, Children’s Hospital, Julia Dyckman Andrus Professor of Pediatric Surgery, Harvard Medical School
“Angiogenesis Regulators in the Cardiovascular System”

2008 - Eli Keshet, Ph.D.
Woll Brothers and Sisters Chair for Cardiovascular Research, Professor of Molecular Biology, Hebrew University, Hadassah Medical Center, Jerusalem
“VEGF, vascular manipulations and ischemic heart disease: Challenges and opportunities”

From left: Drs. Douglas Losordo & Judah Folkman
4th Annual

Jeffrey M. Isner, M.D.
Endowed Memorial Lectureship

November 4, 2009

"Gene Therapy — Mediated Reversal of Congenital Blindness"

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Presented by

Jean Bennett, M.D., Ph.D.
F.M. Kirby Professor and Vice Chair of Research
Department of Ophthalmology
Professor, Cell and Developmental Biology
University of Pennsylvania
Scientist, Center for Cellular and Molecular Therapeutics
The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia

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The Jeffrey M. Isner, M.D.
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Jean Bennett, M.D., Ph.D.

Jean Bennett, M.D., Ph.D., a professor of Ophthalmology and Cell and Developmental Biology, and Vice Chairman for research in Ophthalmology at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) School of Medicine, is a pioneer in retinal gene therapy and internationally recognized for her work in this field. She has developed gene transfer approaches to treat syndromic diseases resulting in vision loss, studies the immune response of the eye to viral vectors, and characterizes and utilizes cell specific promoters for the delivery of therapeutic nucleic acids. Her research, conducted at Penn over the past 17 years, has established the scientific underpinnings which made it possible to test the first potential definitive retinal gene therapy treatment for patients with blinding retinal degenerations.

In addition, her laboratory has developed gene transfer approaches to treat syndromic diseases resulting in vision loss, studies the immune response of the eye to viral vectors, and characterizes and utilizes cell specific promoters for the delivery of therapeutic nucleic acids. Her research, conducted at Penn over the past 17 years, has established the scientific underpinnings which made it possible to test the first potential definitive retinal gene therapy treatment for patients with blinding retinal degenerations.

Dr. Bennett is the Principal Investigator of the Foundation Fighting Blindness-funded Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)-Penn Pediatric Center for Retinal Degenerations at the University of Pennsylvania and the Scientific Advisor of a clinical trial that evaluates the safety and efficacy of gene augmentation for a disease called Leber Congenital Amaurosis. This study was initiated in the fall of 2007 at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

Jeffrey M. Isner, M.D.
(1947-2001)

Jeffrey M. Isner was born in 1947 in Urichesville, Ohio. He attended the University of Maryland, graduating magna cum laude in 1969. Jeff then attended Tufts University School of Medicine, graduating in 1973. He followed his residency in Internal Medicine at St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center with a fellowship in Cardiology at Georgetown University Hospital. After spending several years at the NIH Heart, Lung and Blood Institute Jeff returned to Boston, rising rapidly through the ranks to become Professor of Medicine and Pathology at TUSM. In 1988 Dr. Isner moved to St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center to become Chief of Cardiovascular Research and Director of the Human Gene Therapy Laboratory, where he played a pioneering role in developing gene therapies for treating obstructive atherosclerosis and peripheral vascular disease. This work, as well as groundbreaking studies revealing that endothelial progenitor cells can arise from adult bone marrow, continue to form the conceptual and scientific underpinnings for several fields of basic and clinical cardiovascular research.

At the forefront of gene therapy, Jeff Isner was a caring physician and completely committed to his patients, colleagues, friends and family. Perhaps some of the most memorable qualities of Jeff’s life, in addition to the seminal role that he played in therapeutic angiogenesis, were his inimitable style, matched only by his deep love and devotion to family, where he always found time to balance work with the pleasures and joys that come with parenting. For his work, Jeff was recognized with many awards, including the AMA’s William Beaumont Award in Medicine for outstanding research achievements by an investigator under the age of 50. Taken in the prime of an extraordinary career, Dr. Isner authored over 400 research publications before his untimely death in 2001. At age 53. The Jeffrey M. Isner, M.D. Endowed Memorial Lectureship at TUSM, to be held annually, has been made possible through the generosity of the Isner Family and The Jeffrey M. Isner Foundation for New Directions in Cardiovascular Research.