

Faculty & Friends



Damon Runyon-Rachleff Innovation Award

Assistant Professor Raffaella Sordella, Ph.D., received the 2010 Damon Runyon-Rachleff Innovation Award from the Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation. The grant of \$450,000 is awarded each year to early-career scientists whose novel approaches have the potential to significantly impact the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer. Sordella is developing new constructs for understanding drug resistance in cancer, particularly lung cancer.

Pancreatic Cancer Research Consortium

The Lustgarten Foundation has established a national consortium involving CSHL and five other institutions to advance research aimed at finding a cure for pancreatic cancer. This year, the Foundation is providing \$10 million for studies on the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of what is now the fourth-leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S.

The consortium includes CSHL Cancer Center Director Bruce Stillman and Deputy Director Scott Lowe, as well as top investigators from the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard Medical

School, The David H. Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research at MIT, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, and the University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center.

One project based at CSHL will identify targets for new drug therapies based on genetic analysis. The research will combine comprehensive RNAi screening with preclinical studies in mouse models to identify genetic vulnerabilities in pancreatic cancer cells. Other CSHL scientists will study a therapy targeted at the *K-ras* gene pathway. The *K-ras* gene is the most frequently mutated gene in pancreatic cancer.



2010 WSBS Honorary Degree Recipients

At this year's WSBS Commencement Convocation, honorary degrees were conferred upon Carla Jo Shatz, Ph.D., and Thomas R. Cech, Ph.D. Dr. Cech is a Nobel laureate and pioneer in the study of RNA enzymes and telomerase, the enzyme that helps add DNA at chromosome ends. His Nobel prize-winning discovery of self-splicing RNA overturned the conventional wisdom that biological reactions are always catalyzed by proteins. Cech served as the president of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute from 2000-2009 before returning to full-time research and teaching at the University of Colorado – Boulder, where he is a Distinguished Professor and director of the Colorado Initiative in Molecular Biology.



Dr. Shatz is a professor of biology and neurobiology, and director of the Bio-X program at Stanford University School of Medicine. Her research has helped establish some of the basic principles of early brain development. She found that the spontaneous activity of neurons *in utero* is critical for the formation of precise and orderly neural connections in the central nervous system. Her current work focuses on development of the mammalian visual system.