



American College of Medical Genetics Foundation

ACMG Foundation News
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Leader in Medical Genetics, Dr. David L. Rimoin, Receives ACMG Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award

BETHESDA, MD – March 29, 2010 | David L. Rimoin, MD, PhD, FACMG of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, was presented the American College of Medical Genetics Foundation (ACMGF) second annual Lifetime Achievement Award at its 2010 Annual Meeting.

Dr. Rimoin was recognized for his decades of contributions to genetic medicine, for his research into skeletal dysplasias and heritable disorders of connective tissue, and for helping to organize the field of medical genetics into creditable associations like the ACMG.

Presented the Award at the 2010 ACMG Annual Clinical Genetics Meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Dr. Rimoin was cheered by colleagues, former students, friends and family.

Attendees from more than 29 countries participated in the event.

“Dr. Rimoin is one of the true giants of medical genetics. He’s made enormous contributions in every facet of medical genetics. He is extraordinary in terms of his contribution to our profession and his teaching and work has inspired a tremendous number of geneticists,” said R. Rodney Howell, MD, FACMG, president of the American College of Medical Genetics Foundation.

“It’s a great honor,” said Dr. Rimoin of receiving the award. “It’s amazing to be recognized by your peers this way.”

Born in 1936 in Montreal, Canada, Dr. Rimoin is best known for his research on short stature and skeletal dysplasias and heritable disorders of connective tissue.

He is Director of the International Skeletal Dysplasia Registry, the largest such registry in the world. A prolific writer, he has written articles for more than 410 peer-reviewed publications. His textbook, “Emery and Rimoin’s Principles and Practices of Medical Genetics,” is currently in its fifth edition.

Following a childhood dream of becoming a doctor, Dr. Rimoin chose genetics as a way to gain entrance to McGill University medical school.

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“Ever since I was four or five years old I wanted to be a doctor,” he said. “There was nobody in my family that had been in medicine and in fact no one had gone to college.

“I had to figure out a way to get into medical school. I figured I would get into a program that would allow me to meet people and get a good biology background and a new program in genetics opened up.”

Dr. Rimoin excelled at McGill where he earned his bachelor’s degree with honors in genetics in 1957, his MD and MSc in 1961 and then his doctorate in human genetics from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine where he was recruited by the late Dr. Victor McKusick, in a phone call he will never forget.

I started an internship in internal medicine at McGill and I was standing over a child dying of cystic fibrosis one day and I get a call from, so they said, was Victor McKusick. I thought someone was pulling my leg because he was the most famous person in genetics.

“He said, ‘I’ve heard about you and I want you to come work with me,’” Dr. Rimoin recalled.

What followed was a long and distinguished career of research and leadership in genetics during which he helped organize his profession into associations like the ACMG.

“It was a chance to get medical geneticists recognized as experts in the field and push for funding and medical changes in insurance and the nation to transform a new science into a medical specialty and bring people together to share ideas and to encourage young people to go into the training programs to increase the number of medical geneticists.”

Dr. Rimoin is presently Professor of Pediatrics, Medicine, and Human Genetics at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and Steven Spielberg Chair and Director of the Medical Genetics Institute at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.

He was the founding president of the American Board of Medical Genetics (1979–1983), the founding president of the American College of Medical Genetics (ACMG) (1992–1998) and president of the American Society of Human Genetics (1984).

Dr. Rimoin is responsible for the creation of the Medical Genetics Clinic at the Barnes and Children’s Hospitals of St. Louis, and the Division of Medical Genetics in the Departments of Medicine and Pediatrics at Harbor-UCLA and the Medical Genetics Institute at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. He is also the director of the UCLA Intercampus Genetics Postdoctoral program.

Dr. Rimoin’s work is renowned and has earned him a reputation as a true leader, teacher and administrator, in the field of medical genetics.

“This award is an obvious reflection of (Dr. Rimoin’s) lifetime achievement, which is almost unique in our field,” said Dr. Rimoin’s longtime friend and colleague, Dr. Michael Kaback, Professor Emeritus of Pediatrics and Reproductive Medicine and the Division of Medical Genetics, at the University of California-San Diego.

“No one has contributed more in the global sense in terms of our understanding of the fundamental nature of a very complex group of disorders involving hereditary defects of bone and cartilage, which has been David’s passion for all of his professional life,” Kaback said.

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About the American College of Medical Genetics

Founded in 1991, the American College of Medical Genetics (www.acmg.net) advances the practice of medical genetics by providing education, resources and a voice for more than 1400 biochemical, clinical, cytogenetic, medical and molecular geneticists, genetic counselors and other healthcare professionals committed to the practice of medical genetics. ACMG's activities include the development of laboratory and practice standards and guidelines, advocating for quality genetic services in healthcare and in public health, and promoting the development of methods to diagnose, treat and prevent genetic disease. *Genetics in Medicine*, published monthly, is the official ACMG peer-reviewed journal. ACMG's website (www.acmg.net) offers a variety of resources including Policy Statements, Practice Guidelines, Educational Resources, and a Medical Geneticist Locator. The educational and public health programs of the American College of Medical Genetics are dependent upon charitable gifts from corporations, foundations, and individuals. **The American College of Medical Genetics Foundation** (www.acmgfoundation.org) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to funding the College's diverse efforts to translate genes into health.

About Signature Genomic Laboratories

Signature Genomic Laboratories, founded in 2003, was the first laboratory to provide microarray-based cytogenetic diagnostics with its proprietary SignatureChip® and is the leader in providing microarray-based chromosome analysis. Signature's worldwide client base includes clinical geneticists, neurologists, pediatricians, neonatologists, obstetricians, and the research community. Signature is CAP accredited, CLIA certified, and has clinical licenses from New York, California, Rhode Island and Florida. Additional information about Signature Genomic Laboratories is available at www.signaturegenomics.com.

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