



American College of Medical Genetics Foundation

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Pioneer in Medical Genetics Arno G. Motulsky, MD Honored With Inaugural ACMG Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award

BETHESDA, MD – MARCH 31, 2009 | Arno G. Motulsky, MD, ScD, FACMG, Professor Emeritus (Active), Departments of Medicine (Medical Genetics) and Genome Sciences, University of Washington, Seattle, and a pioneer in the field of medical genetics, was presented the American College of Medical Genetics Foundation (ACMGF) inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award. Dr. Motulsky was recognized for his decades of contributions to genetic medicine and as a founder of the field of pharmacogenetics. Presented the award at the 2009 ACMG Annual Clinical Genetics Meeting in Tampa, Florida, Dr. Motulsky was cheered by colleagues, former students, friends and family. Attendees from more than 25 countries participated in the event.

The new ACMG Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award is the Foundation's highest honor and recognizes an individual who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the field of medical genetics and who exemplifies the highest standards of the profession over a lifetime.

Born in 1923, Dr. Motulsky is known as one of the fathers of modern human genetics, a renowned researcher and teacher, an outstanding mentor, editor, prolific author, collaborator, and as a soft-spoken and intellectually penetrating individual with a strong sense of social justice and ethics.

"Dr. Motulsky epitomizes the highest values of our profession. His tireless efforts to mentor, teach, research and guide have made a lasting and global impact on our field, and he has served as a role model for young people entering the profession over many decades. He has trained and inspired a tremendous number of geneticists," said R. Rodney Howell, MD, FACMG, president of the American College of Medical Genetics Foundation.

Charles J. Epstein, MD, FACMG and one of Dr. Motulsky's first fellows in the early 1960s added, "Dr. Motulsky was one of the first people in the world to start a clinical division of medical genetics, at the University of Washington, in 1957. Along with the late Dr. Victor McKusick, he is indeed the co-father of modern medical genetics. Arno's unwavering commitment as an editor, teacher, lecturer, researcher and author enabled him to set the tone for how clinical genetics is now practiced. He trained an entire generation of geneticists and always set a fine example for

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students ... he showed them how to listen and to use what resources and knowledge they had to move forward on behalf of their patients. He is still remarkably active and is as much intellectually engaged in genetics now as he ever was. No one has a broader grasp of human and medical genetics today.”

On receiving the award, Dr. Motulsky said, “I very much appreciate receiving this new award from the organization that represents all facets of clinical genetics.” In regards to the future of genetics, Dr. Motulsky said, “Our knowledge of genetics and molecular biology is mounting rapidly and applications for diagnosis, prevention and treatment of genetic diseases already exist or are on the horizon. To fully achieve the promise of our science that is often exaggerated by the public media, more research and clinical investigations are required. The American College of Medical Genetics, its members and supporters play a key role in this work.”

Born in Germany and a Holocaust survivor, Dr. Motulsky endured many hardships as a teenager during World War II including a difficult and desperate passage on the S.S. St. Louis, a ship that was meant to bring refugees to asylum in Cuba but was turned away and sent back to Europe. Following confinement in a succession of French internment camps, he was able to secure a visa to the United States and served in the U.S. Army from 1943-46 and 1951-53. Starting with pre-med classes at night school, he studied at Yale and then earned his Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Medicine degrees, the latter with high honors, from the University of Illinois in Chicago. He completed post-doctoral work at Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago and Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C. Dr. Motulsky joined the faculty of the University of Washington, Seattle, in 1953, and had an illustrious and remarkable career there. A participant in high level national committees, an elected member to the National Academy of Science, Institute of Medicine, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society, a recipient of numerous awards throughout his distinguished career, and a member of numerous editorial boards, Dr. Motulsky has authored more than 400 articles and trained more than 70 post-doctoral students in genetics including Joseph Goldstein, MD, who later received the Nobel Prize for his work in cholesterol metabolism, work that began while he studied with Dr. Motulsky.

Note to editors: A downloadable photo of Dr. Motulsky is available in the ACMG Online Newsroom at www.acmg.net. To arrange interviews with experts in medical genetics, contact Kathy Beal, MBA, ACMG Director of Public Relations at kbeal@acmg.net or 301-238-4582.

About the American College of Medical Genetics and ACMG Foundation

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 ACMG 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.

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