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**New Dr. Michael S. Watson Genetic and Genomic Medicine Innovation Award Will Honor  
ACMG's Longstanding Executive Director**

**BETHESDA, MD – September 10, 2019** | The ACMG Foundation for Genetic and Genomic Medicine has announced that it will honor Michael S. Watson, PhD, FACMG, the first and longstanding executive director of the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG), with a new notable award, the ***Dr. Michael S. Watson Genetic and Genomic Medicine Innovation Award***.

Bruce R. Korf, MD, PhD, FACMG, president of the ACMG Foundation said, “The ACMG Foundation is pleased to announce the Dr. Michael S. Watson Genetic and Genomic Medicine Innovation Award. Dr. Watson has served as the Executive Director of the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics for nearly 20 years. This has been a period of dramatic innovation in our field, including powerful new approaches to diagnosis and treatment of rare and common disorders. Dr. Watson has worked to keep the College at the forefront of developing policies and guidelines to help the medical genetics community responsibly incorporate these advances into clinical care. This new Innovation Award will help future generations of medical geneticists remember Dr. Watson’s critical contributions and highlight the continuing importance of innovation in medical genetics and genomics.”

Dr. Watson will be departing the ACMG at the end of 2019. His contributions to ACMG and the field of medical genetics and genomics are legion. When he became the first executive director of the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics in 2000, it would have been impossible to imagine the field of medical genetics today and the pivotal role ACMG would play in the evolution of the field. Dr. Watson has devoted himself to advancing the missions of both the ACMG and its Foundation and it is no hyperbole to say that his hard work and commitment to the growth of ACMG have made the organization what it is today and that he leaves the College in a strong position to face the exciting challenges and growth of the field ahead.

Watson’s leadership has been instrumental in many milestones for the ACMG, including helping to establish ACMG as a professional membership organization and bringing laboratory geneticists into the ACMG—an achievement that unified the voices of clinical and laboratory geneticists in service of the entire medical genetics team and the patients for whom they care. Mike has overseen a dramatic expansion in the financial resources and staff of ACMG, represented medical genetics, medical geneticists and ACMG to numerous government and professional entities, and helped increase the recognition of medical genetics as a primary clinical and laboratory specialty and establish ACMG as the preeminent authority on medical

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genetics and genomics. In 2011, the ACMG and ACMG Foundation presented Mike the inaugural Presidents' Award, to honor his contributions to the College.

Watson received his master's degree in medical genetics and his PhD in Physiology and Biophysics from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He completed his postdoctoral training at Yale University School of Medicine and is board certified by the American Board of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ABMGG) in Clinical Cytogenetics and PhD Medical Genetics. Prior to becoming executive director of the ACMG and ACMG Foundation, Mike was Professor of Pediatrics and Director of the Clinical and Molecular Cytogenetics Laboratory at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri.

A campaign has been launched to fund this award. To honor Dr. Watson's immeasurable contributions to the ACMG and to the entire field of medical genetics and genomics with a contribution, people may donate [online](#) or contact Karl Moeller at [kmoeller@acmgfoundation.org](mailto:kmoeller@acmgfoundation.org) or Nicole Bell at [nbell@acmg.net](mailto:nbell@acmg.net).

Additional details of the Watson Award criteria, nomination details and selection process will be announced in the coming months. For more information about ways to support the work of the ACMG Foundation, please visit [www.acmgfoundation.org](http://www.acmgfoundation.org).

### **About the ACMG Foundation for Genetic and Genomic Medicine**

The ACMG Foundation for Genetic and Genomic Medicine (ACMGF) is a community of supporters and contributors who understand the importance of medical genetics and genomics in healthcare. A non-profit organization established in 1992, the Foundation supports the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG) mission to "translate genes into health"; to foster charitable giving, promote training opportunities to attract future medical geneticist and genetic counselors, to share information about medical genetics, to sponsor important research and much more. To learn more and support the ACMGF mission to create "Better Health through Genetics," please contact Nicole O. Bell, ACMG Foundation Manager, at [nbell@acmg.net](mailto:nbell@acmg.net) or (301) 718-9604 or visit [acmgfoundation.org](http://acmgfoundation.org).

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