About the Award...

Each year, the International Council selects a speaker to deliver the Keith Reimer Distinguished Lecture at the World Congress or speaker's section meeting. The purpose of this lecture is to honor the memory of Dr. Reimer and to recognize his contributions to cardiovascular research. The topic of the lecture must be in the field of ischemia, coronary hemodynamics, cardiac metabolism, or contractile mechanisms. The speaker receives a plaque and $1,000, honorarium in addition to travel expenses.

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Honored Speaker
Dr. R. John Solaro

"Sarcomeric Proteins as a Center of Multiplex Functions in Signaling and Mechano-Transduction in the Myocardium"
R. John Solaro, Ph.D.

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

Dr. Solaro has published over 200 papers in the areas of cellular and molecular mechanisms controlling the contraction of the heart and how these mechanisms are altered by pathological conditions and by pharmacological interventions. He has done seminal work on the role of troponin and troponymycin in switching on contraction, on the role of myofilament protein phosphorylation in the control of cardiac dynamics and in the transition to heart failure, on the unique properties of the embryonic/neonatal isoform of troponin I, and on the enhancement of myofilament activation by pharmacological agents, two of which, Acardi (Pimobendan) and Simvastatin (Lovastatin), are in clinical use. His current studies focus on multiple functions of myofilament and Z-disc proteins in contraction and signaling. Dr. Solaro is currently the holder of a 10-year NIH Merit Award, and is Principal Investigator on an NIH Program Project Grant, an NIH ROI Award, and an NIH Training Grant.

Gerd Heusch, M.D., Ph.D.

STRASBOURG, FRANCE

Gerd Heusch graduated with an M.D. from the Univ. of Bonn in 1970, and with a Ph.D. from the Univ. of Düsseldorf in 1985. Since 1989, Dr. Heusch has been Professor and Chair of Pathophysiology at the University of Essen Medical School. From 1999-2000, Dr. Heusch was a Visiting Professor in the Dept. of Physiology, Univ. of South Alabama, where he is now an Adjunct Professor.

Dr. Heusch has focused his research on the areas of α-adrenergic coronary vasoconstriction and myocardial hibernation/ ischemic preconditioning. He was the first to identify α-adrenergic coronary vasoconstriction distal to coronary stenosis and the resultant myocardial ischemia in anesthetized dogs during cardiac sympathetic nerve stimulation, and subsequently characterized the responsible α1-adrenoceptor subtype and a feedback cycle between sympathetic activation and myocardial ischemia. Recently, he identified a genetic background for enhanced α-adrenergic coronary vasoconstriction in patients. Dr. Heusch developed a pig model of perfusion contraction matching and short-term myocardial hibernation, and subsequently characterized the limits of short-term hibernation in terms of blood flow, inotropic state and duration. He then studied the underlying mechanisms and found an important role for adenosine and KATP-channel activation in his pig model of ischemic preconditioning but not in short-term hibernation. He also characterized the reduction of calcium responsiveness and the role of endogenous NO in short-term hibernation. Recently, he has focused on the pathophysiology of coronary microembolization and its inflammatory consequences in the coronary microcirculation and surrounding myocardium.

Dr. Heusch has published 250 papers, including 150 original articles in peer-reviewed journals. He is currently President of the European Section of the ISHR.

Roberto Bolli, M.D.

MADISON, WISCONSIN

Dr. Bolli graduated from the University of Perugia (Italy) in 1976. He was appointed to the faculty at Baylor Medical College, where he rose to the rank of Professor. In 1994, he accepted the position of Chief of Cardiology at the University of Louisville.

For the past 25 years, Dr. Bolli has carried out careful, innovative studies that have enhanced our understanding of the mechanisms responsible for injury during ischemia and reperfusion and have provided a framework for developing cardioprotective strategies. His earlier work at Baylor established a fundamental role for reactive oxygen species in the pathogenesis of myocardial "stunning." He proposed, tested, and validated the concept that myocardial stunning is a manifestation of oxygen radical-mediated reperfusion injury, and, more recently, has he identified, for the first time, the signal transduction pathways and the cardioprotective genes responsible for the late phase of preconditioning, thereby elucidating the molecular basis of this adaptation of the heart to stress. His discovery that the cardioprotection afforded by preconditioning is mediated by two proteins commonly thought to be detrimental (nitric oxide synthase and cyclooxygenase-2) has implied a reassessment of current paradigms regarding these enzymes and has paved the way for developing novel pharmacologic or genetic therapeutic approaches in patients with coronary artery disease. He has also performed translational research in which he has applied basic insights to the study of preconditioning in man. His discovery that nitroglycerin induces a late preconditioning effect in patients has revealed a new therapeutic property of nitrates.

Dr. Bolli has published 210 papers, including 150 original articles. He is presently a member of the NHLBI Program Project Review Committee (2003-2004), Secretary General and Treasurer of the ISHR (1995-2004), and Associate Editor of Circulation Research and of the Journal of Molecular and Cellular Cardiology.