The purpose of this annual award is to recognize an outstanding scientist who (i) is making major and independent contributions to the advancement of cardiovascular science, and (ii) is leading a growing research program likely to play a major role in the future. The main criteria for selecting awardees are scientific excellence, independence, and potential for future research contributions. While the Peter Harris Award recognizes lifelong accomplishments and the Richard Bing Award recognizes young investigators, the Outstanding Investigator Award (presented annually) is targeted at established investigators who are in the intermediate phase of their academic career.

In non-Congress years, the Outstanding Investigator Award is presented at one of the ISHR Section meetings on a rotating basis. The winner presents a major lecture and receives a $1,000 honorarium and a plaque. An announcement of this Award is published in *Heart News and Views*, and posted in the ISHR website. The winner receives free registration and reimbursement for travel expenses (up to a maximum of $1500 when the recipient delivers the lecture at his/her local Section meeting, and $3,000 when inter-continental travel is required).

Nominations for the Outstanding Investigator Award are sought by the Secretary General from members of the International Council, members of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Molecular and Cellular Cardiology*, and the Councils of ISHR Sections. In addition, the Secretary General publishes an open invitation in the ISHR Website for members to submit nominations.
Dr Sarah Franklin carried out her graduate research in Dr. Craig Thulin’s lab and received a PhD in Biochemistry from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. She was originally trained in biological mass spectrometry techniques during her graduate training and utilized this technology to characterize the protein constituents of lipofuscin and melanolipofuscin to elucidate their origin and contribution to the development of age-related macular degeneration. After graduation, she moved to the University of California – Los Angeles and joined Dr Tom Vondriska’s lab for her postdoctoral training. She utilized quantitative mass spectrometry to identify novel chromatin binding proteins differentially regulated in a mouse model of pressure-overload induced cardiac hypertrophy and heart failure and evaluated the role of these proteins on chromatin structure, gene expression and cardiac physiology using isolated cell and animal models. Her research was the first to characterize the cardiac nuclear proteome and identify novel epigenetic regulators in cardiomyocytes including HMGB1, Nucleolin and Smyd1.

After completing her postdoctoral training, she started her independent research lab at the Nora Eccles Harrison Cardiovascular Research & Training Institute at the University of Utah. Dr Franklin was the first to show that the lysine methyltransferase Smyd1 is differentially expressed in adult mouse models of cardiac hypertrophy and failure consistent with its expression in human heart failure patients. Additionally, she performed the first analysis of Smyd1 function in the adult myocardium using inducible, cardiomyocyte-specific Smyd1 knockout mice and showed that loss of Smyd1 leads to dysregulated cardiac metabolism, hypertrophic growth, fibrosis and functional decline, ultimately leading to heart failure. Subsequently her lab showed that down-regulation of mitochondrial energetics is an early event in Smyd1 knockout mice (occurring before the onset of cardiac dysfunction) and resulted, at least in part, from Smyd1’s regulation of PGC-1α transcription. This work identified Smyd1 as a novel myocyte-specific regulator of mitochondrial metabolism in the heart which is necessary for maintaining mitochondrial bioenergetics.

Dr Franklin’s research has made significant contributions to the field of cardiovascular epigenetics and has revealed discrete molecular mechanisms governing myocyte-specific epigenetic regulation of metabolic enzymes, mitochondrial energetics and ATP production in the normal and diseased heart. In addition, her research has elucidated key biological insights into the molecular functionality of methyltransferases and expanded our understanding of Smyd family biology. Parallel studies in her lab are focused on characterizing the contribution of histone post-translational modifications on genomic plasticity with the long-term goal of understanding the mechanistic basis for genomic regulation in cardiac development and disease.

Dr Franklin has received multiple awards and recognitions for her research achievements including the Chancellor’s Award for postdoctoral research from UCLA, the HUPO Young Investigator Award and First Place in the Young Investigator Competition from the International Society for Heart Research, among others.

Dr. Franklin enjoys mentoring individuals at all career stages and would like to acknowledge all past and current members of her laboratory for the contributions that each have made in driving forward these scientific advancements. She is immensely grateful for the many talented individuals that she has been able to work with over the years, including colleagues and collaborators, and is indebted to the outstanding mentors that have supported her throughout her scientific career. Dr Franklin is honored to receive the Outstanding Investigator Award.

Previous Award Winners….

Bin Zhou, MD, PhD: 2019
Steven P. Jones, PhD: 2018
Jolanda van der Velden, PhD: 2017
Xander Wehrens, MD, PhD: 2017
Johannes Backs, MD, PhD: 2016
Thomas Thum, PhD: 2015
Åsa Gustafsson, PhD: 2014
Deepak Srivastava, MD: 2013
Thomas Eschenhagen, MD: 2012
Walter J. Koch, PhD: 2011
Jeffrey D. Molkentin, PhD: 2010
Mathias Gautel, MD, PhD: 2009
Joseph Loscalzo, MD: 2006
Eric Olson, PhD: 2005
Issei Komuro, MD, PhD: 2003
Peter Carmeliet, MD, PhD: 2002