Young Researchers Receive DeLill Nasser Travel Awards

Thirteen young researchers – five graduate students and eight postdocs – were selected in November 2011 for a 2012 DeLill Nasser Award for Professional Development in Genetics. The award, $1,000 for each recipient, is a travel grant to attend any national or international meeting, or to enroll in laboratory courses that will enhance their careers.

Past President (2011) Scott Hawley, who knew DeLill Nasser personally said, “The students and the postdocs selected for these awards exemplify those qualities that DeLill Nasser promoted – high levels of inquiry on research that opens windows to further investigation.”

The 13 recipients of 2012 DeLill Nasser Awards, their institutions and the conference or lab course they intend to attend are:

**Graduate Students:**

- **Erin S. Keebaugh.** Emory University, Atlanta, GA, 53rd Annual Drosophila Research Conference, Chicago, IL, March 7-11, 2012.
- **Laura H. Okagaki.** University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Keystone Symposium: Fungal Biology, Sante Fe, NM, January 15-20, 2012.
- **Kyle R. Pomraning.** Oregon State University, Corvallis, 11th European Conference on Fungal Genetics, Marburg, Germany, March 30-April 2, 2012.
- **Matthew E. Wolak.** University of California-Riverside, Fourth International Conference on Quantitative Genetics, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK, June 17-22, 2012.

**Postdoctoral Researchers:**

- **Sarah A. Gilmore, Ph.D.** University of California, San Francisco, Keystone Symposium on Eukaryotic Transcription, Snowbird, UT, March 31-April 5, 2012.
- **Clarissa J. Nobile, Ph.D.** University of California, San Francisco, 11th European Conference on Fungal Genetics, Marburg, Germany, March 30-April 2, 2012.

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Six Undergrads Receive Finnerty Travel Awards to DROS Conference

The Genetics Society of America and the Drosophila community of geneticists awarded six undergraduate students the Victoria Finnerty Undergraduate Travel Awards. The awards were used by the students to travel to the 53rd Annual Drosophila Research Conference in Chicago, March 7-11, 2012, where they presented research posters. These students, all juniors or seniors in college are:

- **Selma Avdagic**, Saint Louis University School of Medicine, Missouri, (abstract #671).
- **Samantha Galindo**, University of Wisconsin–Madison, (#971).
- **Kenneth B. Hoehn**, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, (#482).
- **Emily Hsieh**, University of Washington and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle, (#483).
- **Jacqueline McDermott**, Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York, (#730).
- **Mohammad Siddiq**, Indiana University, Bloomington, (#503).

“It is inspiring to see these undergraduates conducting cutting-edge research so early in their scientific careers,” said Adam Fagen, Ph.D., GSA Executive Director. “We at GSA have no doubt that the future of genetics is strong with such talented young people leading the field.”

This is the first time these students have attended a professional scientific research conference where they are describing their research to doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows, and principal investigators from research laboratories all over the world. The experience, described by one student as “both exciting and intimidating,” is an opportunity for them to explore the field of genetics research as a possible career.

“Victoria Finnerty was an outstanding scientist and a dedicated teacher and mentor who conveyed her passion for Drosophila genetics in her creative approaches toward undergraduate education and research. We view this award as an important way to encourage our young scientists to pursue research careers and become our future scientific leaders,” said Elizabeth Gavis, Ph.D., Past President of the Drosophila Board of Directors and Professor at Princeton University.

The Victoria Finnerty Undergraduate Travel Awards were established last year in memory of its namesake, who was a long-time GSA member, a dedicated undergraduate educator at Emory University for 35 years, and an active member of the Drosophila research community and the genetics community at large. The six undergraduates are the first to receive this funding to attend the annual Drosophila Research Conference.

To read the students’ abstracts, go to www.drosophila-conf.org/2012/abstracts/search.html and search by the program number listed above.

13 Young Researchers Receive DeLill Nasser Travel Awards


These awards are named in honor of DeLill Nasser (1929-2000), who was instrumental in promoting genetics research, championing the genome sequencing of Arabidopsis and research in Drosophila during her 22 years as a program director with the National Science Foundation. She was particularly supportive of young scientists, those at the beginning of their careers, and those trying to open new areas of genetic inquiry.

The DeLill Nasser Awards for Professional Development are awarded twice a year – in the fall for meetings or labs taking place the following January to June and in the spring for meetings or labs from July through December of the current year – to graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. For more information, see www.genetics-gsa.org/pages/delill.shtml.