

# NEWS

**HOLD FOR RELEASE**  
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## **Genetics Society of America Announces 2008 DeLill Nasser Award Recipients**

*Bethesda, MD – January 7, 2008* -- The Genetics Society of America is pleased to announce eight recipients of the DeLill Nasser Awards for Professional Development in Genetics. Thanks to a generous gift from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund in 2007 and donations from GSA members, more than \$10,000 was distributed to four graduate students and four postdoctoral researchers for 2008.

The graduate students are: **Yen-Ping Hsueh**, Duke University, Durham, NC; **Roshan A. Jain**, Princeton University, New Jersey; **Chanhee Kang**, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX; and, **Amanda M. Larracuente**, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

The postdoctoral researchers are: **Gilles R. Hickson**, University of California, San Francisco; **Kate M. O'Connor-Giles**, University of Wisconsin-Madison; **Mara Schvarzstein**, Stanford University, California; and **Sarit Smolikov**, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA.

Beginning with the graduate students, additional information on the award recipients and how they plan to use their grant is listed below:

**Yen-Ping Hsueh**, a graduate student who is working in Dr. Joseph Heitman's laboratory at **Duke University**, is doing research on the genetic and molecular control of mating type and cell fate transitions in the human fungal pathogen, *Cryptococcus neoformans*. Hsueh will use her award to attend the GSA-sponsored meeting, GENETIC ANALYSIS: Model Organisms to Human Biology meeting, January 5-8, 2008, in San Diego, California.

**Roshan A. Jain**, a graduate student working in Dr. Elizabeth R. Gavis' lab at **Princeton University**, Jain is about to begin his postdoctoral research and is looking forward to researching neural circuitry in zebrafish. Jain will be using his award to attend the "Zebrafish Development and Genetics" course at Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory in Massachusetts, August 10-24, 2008.

**Chanhee Kang** is a graduate student at the **University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center** working with Dr. Leon Avery. Kang is researching the mechanisms that trigger anti-hunger (food) signaling in *Caenorhabditis elegans*. He will use his award to attend the GSA-sponsored meeting, GENETIC ANALYSIS: Model Organisms to Human Biology, January 5-8, 2008, in San Diego, California.

**Amanda M. Larracuente** is a graduate student at **Cornell University** in Ithaca, NY, working in Dr. Andrew G. Clark's laboratory. Larracuente's research focuses on the evolution of the Y chromosome of *D. pseudoobscura*. She will use her award to attend the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Drosophila Research Conference, sponsored by GSA, in San Diego, April 2-6, 2008.

**Gilles R. Hickson** is a postdoctoral researcher at the **University of California, San Francisco**, working in Dr. Patrick O'Farrell's cell biology laboratory. Using *Drosophila* as a model organism, Hickson is dissecting molecular mechanisms controlling cytokinesis. Dr. Hickson will use his award to attend the "Mechanics and Control of Cytokinesis" meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, January 9-12, 2008.

**Kate M. O'Connor-Giles**, is a postdoctoral fellow working in Dr. Barry Ganetzky's laboratory at the **University of Wisconsin-Madison**. She is studying the molecular regulation of synaptic growth and plasticity, using the larval neuromuscular junction (NMJ) of *Drosophila* as a model system. In order to learn about emerging technologies in light microscopy and fluorescent molecular probes, Dr. O'Connor-Giles, will attend the "Imaging Structure & Function in the Nervous System" course at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, July 22-August 11, 2008.

**Mara Schvarzstein** is a postdoctoral researcher in Dr. Anne M. Villeneuve's laboratory at **Stanford University School of Medicine** whose goal is to investigate mechanisms that ensure successful chromosome inheritance during meiosis. To reach this goal, Dr. Schvarzstein will use her award to attend the Gordon Meiosis Conference in New London, NH, June 8-13, 2008.

**Sarit Smolikov**, a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Monica Colaiacovo's laboratory at **Harvard Medical School**, Dr. Smolikov studies the structure and function of the synaptonemal complex in *C. elegans*, and in particular the mechanisms underlying chromosome segregation in meiosis. Dr. Smolikov will use her award to attend the Gordon Meiosis Conference in New London, NH, June 8-13, 2008.

The DeLill Nasser Award for Professional Development in Genetics was established in 2001 by the Genetics Society of America to honor the memory of and recognize the critical role that Dr. DeLill Nasser, a GSA member and Program Director for Eukaryotic Genetics at the National Science Foundation, played in advancing the science of genetics. Since its establishment, approximately \$27,000 has been distributed to 25 young researchers to assist them in attending national and international meetings or enroll in laboratory courses.

The Genetics Society of America is a membership society representing nearly 5,000 scientists and educators in the field of genetics. The Society promotes communication of advances in genetics through its journal, *GENETICS*, and by sponsoring scientific meetings focused on key organisms widely use in genetic research including the *Drosophila* Research Conference, the Yeast and Molecular Biology Meeting, the International *C. elegans* Meeting, the International Conference on Cell and Molecular Biology of *Chlamydomonas*, the Fungal Genetics Conference, and the Zebrafish Development and Genetics Meeting. The Society's newest meeting, Genetic Analysis: Model Organisms to Human Biology enables investigators working on model organisms and those working in human genetics to communicate and exchange ideas in genetics research.

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