

## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

For Immediate Release  
November 8, 2011

Contact: Andrea Early  
508-289-7652; aearly@mbledu

### **MBL Course Director Eric Davidson Awarded 2011 International Prize for Biology**

MBL, WOODS HOLE, MA—Developmental biologist Eric H. Davidson, a longtime affiliate of the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL), has been awarded the prestigious 2011 International Prize for Biology from The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS). Davidson will be honored for his work on gene regulation in development and evolution at a ceremony at the Japanese Academy in Tokyo on November 28 in the presence of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. A two-day symposium honoring Davidson's work in developmental biology will follow. Davidson joins MBL distinguished scientist, Shinya Inoué, who received the prize in 2003.

The International Prize for Biology is awarded annually by the JSPS to an individual who "has made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of basic research in the field of biology." It aims to "commemorate the sixty-year reign of Emperor Showa and his longtime devotion to biological research and to offer tribute to the present Emperor His Majesty Emperor Akihito, who has strived over many years to advance the study taxonomy of gobioid fishes while contributing continuously to the developing of this Prize."

Davidson is the Norman Chandler Professor of Cell Biology at the California Institute of Technology, where he has been on the faculty since 1971. He has had a long connection with the MBL, having spent time at the laboratory as a student, faculty, and trustee. Davidson first came to the MBL in 1953 as a teenager working in the laboratory of L.V. Heilbrunn. He returned to Woods Hole for a total of 15 years in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s to direct the MBL's Embryology course, and served as an MBL trustee from 1991 to 1996. Davidson is presently an MBL Corporation member and co-director of MBL's Gene Regulatory Networks course, which he initiated in 2009.

"Eric has had an extraordinary association with the MBL that has extended nearly 60 years," said MBL President and Director Gary Borisy. "By elucidating the concept of Gene Regulatory Networks, he has made great contributions to the current understanding of animal development and evolution. Eric's pioneering work is leading the way to unlocking the secrets of development, knowledge that is crucial to understanding some of today's most devastating diseases. The MBL is proud to call him a member of our community and we congratulate him on this well-deserved award."

Davidson earned his B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1958 and Ph.D. from Rockefeller University in 1963, where he remained on the faculty until 1971. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and has written five books and more than 350 research, theory and review papers on mechanisms of development and evolution.

Davidson will receive a cash award and medal. In addition, an international symposium on the Davidson's area of research will also be held.

For more about the award see <http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-biol/index.html>

—###—

*The Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) is dedicated to scientific discovery and improving the human condition through research and education in biology, biomedicine, and environmental science. Founded in 1888 in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, the MBL is an independent, nonprofit corporation.*