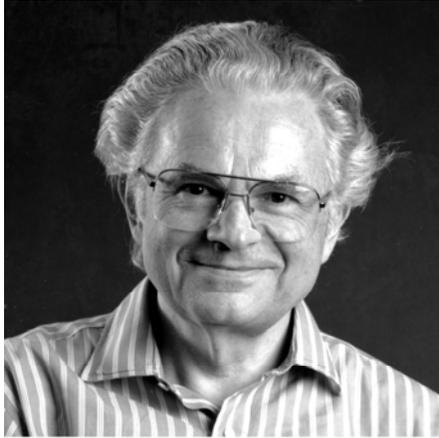


## Igor Dawid Receives *Developmental Biology*-Society for Developmental Biology Lifetime Achievement Award



Igor B. Dawid has received the 2008 *Developmental Biology*-SDB Lifetime Achievement Award for his exceptional contributions to our understanding of the molecular underpinnings of development. Early in his career, Dr. Dawid's finding that extra DNA found in amphibian eggs is mitochondrial DNA of maternal origin was one of the earliest proofs that mitochondrial DNA exists.

"[Dr.] Dawid's early work in the 60s and 70s contributed important molecular details about mitochondrial DNA," writes Donald Brown of the Carnegie Institution. "All of this basic information has been essential to understand the role of mitochondrial DNA in metabolism and disease."

Since 1982, Dr. Dawid has served as the chief of the Laboratory of Molecular Genetics at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), where he was also acting scientific director for two years. Before joining the NICHD, Dr. Dawid began his NIH career with the National Cancer Institute where he was chief of the Developmental Biochemistry Section for four years.

Marc Kirschner, chair of the Department of Systems Biology at Harvard Medical School, calls Dr. Dawid an exemplary developmental biologist. "In retrospect," he writes, "his early work on molecular features of developmental systems prepared him for the detailed molecular studies in which he has excelled today. Igor Dawid is one of the major figures who brought the study of early developmental mechanisms, such as gastrulation, to a molecular level."

Dr. Dawid received his doctorate in chemistry from the University of Vienna. He started his professional career as a postdoctoral fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which he followed with a fellowship at the Carnegie Institution of Washington in Baltimore, MD. After completing his fellowship, Dr. Dawid returned to Europe to accept a position as a visiting investigator at the Max-Planck-Institute for Biology in Tübingen, Germany. Returning to Baltimore three years later, Dr. Dawid spent 12 years in the Carnegie Institution's Department of Embryology. During that time, he also worked as a part-time assistant professor in Johns Hopkins University's Department of Biology.

Throughout his career, Dr. Dawid consistently has served as a mentor to young scientists, many of whom now hold distinguished positions in government, industry, and universities throughout the world. One of his former students is Raymond Habas, who is a member of the Cancer Institute of New Jersey and assistant professor at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Robert Wood Johnson School of Medicine. Dr. Habas writes: "Indeed for me, the training I have received in Dr. Dawid's laboratory has given me the scientific foundation and insights that few mentors could have afforded... It can be easily said

and each of us confesses without any hesitation that it was an honor and a privilege to be trained by Dr. Dawid.”

Dr. Dawid belongs to a number of professional societies and committees, including the Society for Developmental Biology, International Society of Developmental Biologists, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Society of Biological Chemists, American Society for Cell Biology, and Genetics Society of America.

In addition to receiving the *DB-SDB* Lifetime Achievement Award, Dr. Dawid is a member in the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; a fellow in both the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Academy of Microbiology; and a corresponding member in the Austrian Academy of Science. He has received the Distinguished Service Award from the national Department of Health and Human Services, the Presidential Rank Awards both for Meritorious and Distinguished Service, the NIH Mider Lecture, and an honorary doctoral degree from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland.

Dr. Dawid was the editor-in-chief of SDB's official journal *Developmental Biology* from 1975-1980. He serves on numerous editorial boards, including *Developmental Biology*, the *International Journal of Developmental Biology*, *Zebrafish*, and the *International Journal of Biological Sciences*. In past years, he has served on the editorial boards of journals including *Cell*; *Nucleic Acids Research*; *Annual Reviews of Biochemistry*; *Genes and Development*; *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, where he was chairman of the board from 1988 to 1991; *Comptes Rendus, Academie des Sciences, Série III*; and *Development, Growth and Differentiation*.

Dr. Dawid's papers have appeared in the world's foremost scientific publications and number in the hundreds. For further information about Dr. Dawid's research, please go to: <http://dir2.nichd.nih.gov/dirweb/organizationDetail.html;jsessionid=C884932D1621606EF75EAAFD4FF2B902?x=vqJ%3E%3EC&g=09c3daaa58809a046863bac00f702e3f>.

Each year, the SDB gives the [Developmental Biology-Society for Developmental Biology Lifetime Achievement Award](#) to an outstanding developmental biologist. Criteria for this award include a consistent record of exceptional contributions to the field and an ongoing commitment to training young scientists.

*Photo credit: Ron Reeder*

*By Anne Blank*