

The Henry G. Friesen

INTERNATIONAL PRIZE

in Health Research

LE PRIX INTERNATIONAL

de la Recherche en Santé Henry G. Friesen



(Est. 2005)



April 14, 2009

RENOWNED CANADIAN GENOMIC-SCIENTIST WINS PRESTIGIOUS FRIESEN INTERNATIONAL PRIZE IN HEALTH RESEARCH

Toronto – Internationally renowned Canadian physician Sir John Bell, Regius Professor of Medicine, Oxford University and President of the UK's Academy of Medical Sciences was today named the 2009 winner of the Henry G. Friesen International Prize in Health Research.

His research led to the characterization of genetic susceptibility to auto-immune diseases, particularly Type 1 Diabetes, Auto-immune Thyroid Disease, Inflammatory Bowel Disease and Rheumatoid Arthritis. This work also helped in the mapping of genes involved in recognition of antigens that prompt undesirable immune responses.

The Prize, established by the Friends of Canadian Institutes of Health Research in collaboration with the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences and CBC Radio, recognizes exceptional innovation by a visionary health leader of international stature. He will receive the Prize and deliver a public lecture on September 22, 2009 in Ottawa.

Dr. Bell completed his undergraduate education at the University of Alberta and proceeded to Oxford University to study Medicine as a Rhodes Scholar. He subsequently went to Stanford University, pursuing his interest in immunology and genetics.

Dr. Bell has been extensively involved in the development of genetics and genomics programs in patient-related research across the UK and elsewhere. He continues to be a prescient force in the search for more personalized medicine that will shape the future of disease prevention and health care. He is the founder of the Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics that emerged as a leader in Genome-wide Association Studies. These studies are based on large population samples and high throughput genotyping to identify the combinations of genetic variants that impart susceptibility for common chronic diseases. They are now accepted as a fundamental tool in defining the genomic basis of clinical descriptions and

place his achievements alongside other great scientific innovators of our time.

Professor Bell has had an extraordinary impact worldwide as evidenced by the frequency of scientific and policy publications, with over 800 citations by other authors per year. He provides his counsel to a wide range of panels and boards for public and the private sector bodies responsible for health research in Canada, Sweden, Denmark, France, Singapore and the UK. He is currently a member of the Gates Foundation Global Health Advisory Board. In recognition of his organizational genius and scientific vision, in 2008 he was appointed Chair of the Office of Strategic Coordination of Health Research (OSCHR) by the British Government. In that capacity, Dr. Bell will help focus research investments and facilitate more efficient translation of Health Research into economic and social benefit.

He has continued to stay involved with the planning of Health Research in Canada having served as Chair of the first CIHR International Review Committee and in various capacities on Boards and Committees of Genome Canada, the Alberta Heritage Foundation, the Gairdner Foundation and the Government of Ontario.

The Henry G. Friesen International Prize in Health Research was established in 2005 by the Friends of Canadian Institutes of Health Research (FCIHR) in recognition of Dr. Henry Friesen's distinguished leadership, vision and innovative contributions to health and health research. The \$25,000 Friesen Prize is awarded annually.

For further information on Friends of CIHR and the Friesen International Prize, please visit: www.fcihr.ca

For a full biographical sketch of Prof. Sir John Bell, please see: <http://download.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140673608617481.pdf?id=afe8b6b6e1926035:47de4ecb:1203e81517b:59e31238005697445>

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**To arrange an interview, or for more information, please contact:
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