

Preface

The Twentieth American Peptide Society Symposium, *Peptides for Youth*, was held on June 26–30, 2007, at the Palais de Congrès and the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Montréal, Québec, Canada. The third time the APS meeting has come to Canada, and the first time in Montréal, *Peptides for Youth* celebrated the society, its history and traditions, and launched many new initiatives for enhancing member participation at the meeting. Attended by over 1,000 participants, *Peptides for Youth* was a success in scientific content, balance of industrial and academic interests, speaker diversity (scientific, gender and geographic), speaker and poster quality and quantity, the high turnout at the lectures, the venues, the entertainment, the dinners, the celebration of past pioneers, the recruitment, education and encouragement of young investigators, and the sense of freshness.

The Symposium was filled with excellent lecture sessions and workshops, organized by the Scientific Advisory Board and often dedicated to the Pioneers of the field (with grateful sponsorship): *Folding, Recognition, and Catalysis: A session dedicated to Elkan Blout* Sponsored by Wiley, *The Makineni Lecture* endowed by Polypeptide Laboratories, *Peptide, Protein, and Peptidomimetic Synthesis honoring Ralph Hirshmann* sponsored by Merck and Organic Letters, and *Peptide and Membrane Proteins: dedicated to Miklos Bodansky* sponsored by IPSEN, Abbott Laboratories, and Synthetech. Portraying the valued history of our Society, ten Portraits of the Pioneers of the American Peptide Society were prepared by volunteer students from the Universities of Montréal, Sherbrooke and Montpellier, and displayed at the entrance to the Exposition. These posters have now been reformatted for redisplay in this publication. The student volunteers also prepared and performed on the middle day of the meeting a historical slide show scored to the Cole Porter song “Experiment”, the lyrics of which in this publication, preface a reproduction of this retrospective with North American bias of the growth of our field from the first peptide synthesis of Fischer more than a hundred years ago to *Peptides for Youth*.

With a nod of gratitude and respect to the pioneers of the Society, the stage was set for the main objective of *Peptides for Youth*, to encourage and recruit the next generation of peptide scientists. Peptide Idol, a new format for selecting the winner of the Young Investigator poster competition, was a hit, so was placing the Young Investigator Oral Presentations into the heart of the meeting. We are grateful to ESCOM, CS Bio, and Amgen for providing sponsorship for these events, which illustrated the strength of the Society’s future. Moreover, the Molecules of Life Project was launched with the debut of the Peptides of Life in which art and science were employed together to teach a syllabus of twelve peptides to elementary school students, as presented in three posters at the meeting and discussed in more detail in a proceeding in this publication.

Other new additions to the meeting format included the General Assembly, in which members had an open forum to voice their opinion on Society activities; the Networking Lunch, in which Young Investigators were given opportunity to network with senior members, and the Session on Complementary and Alternative Medicine, featuring new avenues for developing peptide science. In addition, a morning Yoga Session on the roof of the Hyatt hotel and an evening gazing at fireworks from Club 737 at the top of one of Montréal’s tallest buildings, both provided complementary social and professional settings for the exchange of ideas, to complement the

traditional venues of the Opening Reception, Merrifield and Speakers Dinners and Closing Banquet.

Peptides for Youth was driven with heart and volunteer students rose to the occasion to deliver. The students prepared slides to advertise the sponsors for all of the events of the meeting, which were effectively shown on the third screen in parallel to the talks. They created an up-to-date information board, which provided highlights on the many events of the meeting. The presence of helpful student volunteers addressed many of the meeting needs. Our students made us extremely proud as they proved to be a group of very high quality colleagues who in the face of a formidable challenge worked undaunted side-by-side in a valiant effort. For this, we will be forever grateful. Particular thanks goes to head student volunteers, Ph.D. students Carnie Bourguet and Danny Fillion, as well as the new co-chairs of the Student Affairs Committee, Dr. Audrey Kelleman and Professor Jung-Mo Ahn.

This book captures about a half of the total number of oral and poster contributions from the 20th APS meeting, including the memorable Merrifield Award Lecture by Dr. Isabella Karle and the Makinini Award Lecture by Professor Ronald Raines. We are pleased that this volume is included in the *Advances in Experimental Medicine and Biology*, a highly-regarded and ISI-ranked Springer book series. As per the meeting, advances in the synthesis, production, delivery, characterization and application of peptide products particularly in the fields of medicine and materials science are well represented here.

As the American Peptide Society now looks toward the 21st Symposium, *Breaking Away*, momentum and knowledge exist for creating a meeting that addresses more effectively the interests of our younger membership from both the academic and industrial sectors.