

For Immediate Release

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AFAR TO PRESENT 2019 SCIENTIFIC AWARDS
AT GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA ANNUAL MEETING

Pinchas Cohen of USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology to receive
Irving S. Wright Award of Distinction

Nathan LeBrasseur of Mayo Clinic to receive
Vincent Cristofalo Rising Star Award in Aging Research

November 11, 2019 (Austin, Texas) -- The American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR), a national non-profit organization whose mission is to support and advance healthy aging through biomedical research, is pleased to recognize the outstanding contributions of **Pinchas Cohen, M.D.**, and **Nathan LeBrasseur, Ph.D., M.S.**, to the field of aging research through its Scientific Awards of Distinction.

This year's awards will be presented at a special ceremony held in conjunction with the **Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA)** on **Friday, November 15, 2019** at the **Austin Convention Center** (Room 9C, Level 3) from 5:00-6:30pm, followed by a reception from 6:30 - 7:30 pm.



Pinchas Cohen, M.D., Dean of the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, will receive the **Irving S. Wright Award of Distinction**.

Established in 1982, the Irving S. Wright award is named in honor of AFAR's founder and recognizes exceptional contributions to basic or clinical research in the field of aging.



Nathan LeBrasseur, Ph.D., M.S., Professor, Associate Director of the Paul F. Glenn Center for Biology of Aging Research, and Director of the Healthy Aging and Independent Living Program, Robert and Arlene Kogod Center on Aging, Mayo Clinic, will receive the **Vincent Cristofalo Rising Star Award in Aging Research**.

The Cristofalo award, established in 2008, is named in honor of the late Dr. Vincent Cristofalo, who dedicated his career to aging research and to encourage young scientists to investigate important problems in the biology of aging.

At the awards presentation, each winner will present a lecture sharing insights from their research:

- Dr. Cohen's lecture, "Mitochondrial System Biology as a Window into Diseases of Aging," will discuss mitochondrial peptides and their roles in regulating biology and physiology related to aging processes and conditions of aging-related diseases that are associated with mtDNA alterations.
- Dr. LeBrasseur's lecture, "Biomarkers of Senescent Cell Burden" will discuss cellular senescence in the context of aging, strategies to counter senescence and extend healthspan, and candidate biomarkers of systemic senescent cell burden.

Nominations for AFAR's Irving S. Wright and Vincent Cristofalo awards are by invitation, and are judged by an independent panel of leading aging researchers. Both awards come with framed citations and carry a cash prize of \$5,000. The two honorees were also recognized at AFAR's Annual Awards dinner in New York City on Thursday, November 7, in New York City.

"These awards are given annually to members of the aging research community whose work advances the field and advances our understanding of aging," says AFAR Executive Director Stephanie Lederman, Ed.M. "The Irving S. Wright and Vincent Cristofalo awards are named for two visionary scientists whose leadership made AFAR and aging research what it is today. Dr. Cohen and Dr. LeBrasseur follow the very highest standards for aging research that have been part of AFAR's DNA from the beginning."

To date, AFAR has presented forty Irving Wright Awards and twelve Vincent Cristofalo awards. Learn more about the **history of AFAR's Scientific Awards and past awardees** at <http://www.afar.org/research/awards/scientific-awards>.

About Pinchas Cohen, M.D., AFAR 2019 Irving S. Wright Award of Distinction

Pinchas Cohen, MD, is the dean of the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, executive director of the Ethel Percy Andrus Gerontology Center, and holder of the William and Sylvia Kugel Dean's Chair in Gerontology. Dr. Cohen Graduated with highest honors from the Technion Medical School, trained at Stanford, and held faculty positions at the University of Pennsylvania and UCLA. Dr. Cohen's current research focus is on the emerging science of mitochondrial-derived peptides, which he discovered. These peptides include humanin, a novel protective factor representing a new therapeutic target in diabetes and Alzheimer's disease; MOTS-c, a potent anti-diabetes and anti-obesity, exercise-mimetic agent discovered in the Cohen lab in 2015, that is currently in human clinical trials for NASH; and multiple other published and unpublished peptides involved in host of human disease. He has received numerous awards for his research, including a National Institute of Aging "EUREKA" Award and the National Institutes of Health Director Transformative RO1 Grant. He also received the Glenn Award for Research in Biological Mechanisms of Aging and is an elected fellow of the Gerontological Society of America. Dr. Cohen received the Glenn Foundation for Medical Research/AFAR Breakthroughs in Gerontology (BIG) Award in 2018, and was named a PBS-Next Avenue Top 50 Influencers in Aging. Cohen is past president of the Growth Hormone Society and has served on the Endocrine Society Steering Committee. He sits on multiple NIH study sections and on several editorial boards. He also holds several patents for novel peptides and is the cofounder of CohBar, a biotechnology company developing mitochondrial peptides. He is a member of the National Academy of Inventors. As dean, Cohen is leading several new initiatives at the USC Leonard Davis School, including a major focus on the creation of tools for "precision aging," an approach using technologies such as genomics towards individualizing healthy aging strategies, which has been featured in the Milken Global Conference and in the Bloomberg Longevity Economy Conference.

About Nathan LeBrasseur, PhD, M.S., AFAR 2019 Vincent Cristofalo Rising Star Award in Aging Research

Nathan LeBrasseur, PhD, is a Consultant, Professor, and the Co-Chair of Research in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Mayo Clinic. Dr. LeBrasseur directs the Healthy Aging and Independent Living Program in the Robert and Arlene Kogod Center on Aging, and is an Associate Director of the Paul F. Glenn Center for Biology of Aging Research at Mayo Clinic. His laboratory conducts translational "bench-to-bedside" research on strategies to improve physical function, metabolism, and resilience in the face of aging and disease. His latest work has centered on cellular senescence, a biological mechanism that underlies aging and disease, and interventions to counter this process to promote healthy aging. Dr. LeBrasseur has recently received the Glenn Award for Research in Biological Mechanisms of Aging, the Nathan W. Shock Award from the National Institute on Aging. He is a fellow of the Gerontological Society of America. Dr. LeBrasseur received a Glenn/AFAR Scholarship for Research in the Biology of Aging in 2002.

About AFAR

The American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) is a national non-profit organization that supports and advances pioneering biomedical research that is revolutionizing how we live healthier and longer. For nearly four decades, AFAR has served as the field's talent incubator, providing more than \$181 million to nearly 4,200 investigators at premier research institutions nationwide. A trusted leader and strategist, AFAR also works with public and private funders to steer high quality grant programs and interdisciplinary research networks. AFAR-funded researchers are finding that modifying basic cellular processes can delay—or even prevent—many chronic diseases, often at the same time. They are discovering that it is never too late—or too early—to improve health. This groundbreaking science is paving the way for innovative new therapies that promise to improve and extend our quality of life—at any age. Learn more at www.afar.org or follow AFARorg on Twitter and Facebook.

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