afar american federation for aging research

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URSULA JAKOB, PHD AND NORBERT PERRIMON, PHD RECEIVE 2019 BREAKTHROUGHS IN GERONTOLOGY (BIG) AWARDS FROM THE GLENN FOUNDATION FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH AND AFAR

ANN ARBOR, MI AND BOSTON, MA— The Glenn Foundation for Medical Research has announced the recipients of its 2019 **Breakthroughs in Gerontology (BIG) Awards** as **Ursula Jakob, PhD,** of the University of Michigan and **Norbert Perrimon, PhD**, of Harvard Medical School.

Administered by the American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR), the two-year BIG award provides $300,000 for research projects aimed at discoveries that address human aging and healthspan.

Ursula Jakob, PhD is a Professor at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. With the support of the award, Dr. Jakob will study the role of early epigenetic events in stress resistance and lifespan.

By studying the nematode worm *Caenorhabditis elegans*, a well-recognized aging model, Dr. Jakob has discovered that specific signals, encountered by individuals during early development, can set processes into motion that act to extend their lifespan. Dr. Jakob will now seek to determine and understand the long-term effects that are responsible for the increased lifespan in an effort to find later-stage interventions that promote longevity, and test whether these early-life events promote longevity even in subsequent generations.

Norbert Perrimon, PhD is a Professor at Genetics, Blavatnik Institute, Harvard Medical School, in Boston, Massachusetts. With the support of the award, Dr. Perrimon will study regulation of aging processes by molecules and pathways involved in organ communication.

Dr. Perrimon's laboratory is interested in dissecting the "Inter-organ Communication Network", identifying new hormonal systems and determining their physiological roles and regulation. Dr. Perrimon will use a systematic approach with a model organism, the fly *Drosophila melanogaster*, to identify molecules involved in organ communication that influence aging.

"Through the BIG awards, our aim is to support research that leads to a greater understanding of biological aging that will contribute to the development of treatments or preventive measures that extend human healthspan," notes Mark R. Collins, President of The Glenn Foundation for Medical Research.

Since the inception of the award in 2005, the Breakthroughs in Gerontology (BIG) Awards have provided $7 million to 34 investigators nationwide. Awardees are selected by a committee of distinguished scientists working in the field of aging research.

"We are pleased to collaborate with the Glenn Foundation for Medical Research to translate the knowledge in the basic biology of aging into therapies and interventions that will help us all live healthier and longer as we grow older," notes Stephanie Lederman, EdM, Executive Director, AFAR.

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About the Glenn Foundation for Medical Research - Founded by Paul F. Glenn in 1965, the mission of the Glenn Foundation for Medical Research is to extend the healthy years of life through research on mechanisms of biology that govern normal human aging and its related physiological decline, with the objective of translating research into interventions that will extend healthspan with lifespan. Learn more at glennfoundation.org.

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. In 2019, AFAR grant programs are providing more than $3,700,000 in support to investigators and students. 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.