Columbia Celebrates Lou Gehrig’s 100th Birthday in the Low Library Rotunda

On Nov. 3, Columbia and the Eleanor and Lou Gehrig MDA/ALS Research Center sponsored a gala celebration and exhibition in honor of Lou Gehrig’s centennial birthday. Gehrig, a Columbia College alumnus before becoming a baseball legend, died of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (often called Lou Gehrig’s disease or ALS), a degenerative disease of the nervous system that usually is fatal within three to five years of diagnosis. The unique event featured rare Gehrig memorabilia on loan from the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. The birthday gala is one of several events planned to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Columbia University and marks one of the rare times the Hall of Fame has lent part of its collection to another institution.

The Lou Gehrig Centennial Birthday Celebration will benefit the Eleanor and Lou Gehrig MDA/ALS Research Center at Columbia University, established by the Gehrig estate in 1987. The center’s mission is to further ALS treatment and research with an eye toward its eradication over the next decade.

From Left, John Sterling, Sportscaster and Master of Ceremonies, Vice President and Chief Curator, National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Mary Robinson Speaks at SIPA


Mary Robinson’s full luncheon address will be accessible at sipa.columbia.edu in the weeks following the event.

SIPA’s Merit Janow appointed to World Trade Organization’s Seven-Member Appellate Body

Newly appointed Janow will serve a four-year term. The Appellate Body is tasked with hearing appeals relating to issues of law and legal interpretations developed by dispute settlement panels.

“It is a great honor to serve on the Appellate Body,” Janow said. “USTR nominated me for the post in late October. I am very pleased with today’s decision to appoint Merit Janow,” said U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick in a USTR press release issued on Friday, Nov. 7. “Professor Janow embodies the qualities we seek in the Appellate Body: integrity, public and professional experience on a broad spectrum of issues and judicial temperament to ensure the highest level of objectivity,” USTR nominated Janow and one other American for the post in late October.

Janow joined Columbia in 1994 and currently teaches courses in international economic law and trade policy at SIPA and international trade law and antitrust at Columbia Law School. Before joining the Columbia faculty, she was Deputy Assistant Trade Representative for Japan and China (1990-1993), and practiced as a corporate attorney for Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom in New York, where she worked on domestic and cross-border mergers and acquisitions.

Janow is the author of numerous publications on U.S-Japan and U.S.-Asian economic and trade relations as well as on international economic law and policy. She served as Executive Director of an international antitrust advisory committee to the Attorney General, Assistant Attorney General for Antitrust and as a WTO panelist in a 2001-2002 trade dispute European Communities—Trade Description of Sardines (WT/DS231). She received a law degree from Columbia.

Janow’s nomination was formally approved by the full WTO membership in a Nov. 7 Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU) meeting and a statement announcing her selection was issued the same day. According to USTR, it “...was the result of a recommendation from a WTO selection committee composed of diplomats from all over the world serving as the chairpersons of the key WTO committees.” The WTO also reappointed three other members to the Appellate Body last week including Georges Michel Ali-Saab of Egypt, Arumuganathan Venkatchalam of India and Yasuhei Taniguchi of Japan, each of whom will serve a second four-year term.

Ronald Breslow Receives Welch Award in Chemistry for Lifetime Achievements

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compounds, among these SAHA, that fight cancer.

Some of these compounds may be effective at stopping the growth of cancer cells. SAHA, for instance, targets tumor cells, which do not fully mature but rather continuously divide. The discovery is currently undergoing clinical trials at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center.

“In biomimetic chemistry we take what we have observed in nature and apply its principles to the invention of novel synthetic compounds that can achieve the same goals,” said Breslow. “As an analogy, we did not simply make larger versions of birds when we invented airplanes, but we did take the idea of the wing from nature, and then used its aerodynamic principles in our own way to build a jumbo jet.”

Breslow has written more than 400 papers and three books: Organic Reaction Mechanisms, How Enzymes Work, and Beyond the Molecular Frontier. His many honors include the prestigious National Medal of Science, awarded to him in 1991, the American Chemical Society Bader Award in Bioorganic or Bioinorganic Chemistry, the New York City Mayor’s Award in Science, the American Chemical Society Priestley Medal, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences Award in Chemical Sciences, the Columbia Alumni Association Great Teacher Award, the British Chemical Society Centenary Medal, and the American Chemical Society Award in Pure Chemistry. He is also a past president of the American Chemical Society and a member of the National Academy of Sciences.

He is the third Columbia professor to win the Welch Award, joining Gilbert Stork, Higgins Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, who won in 1993, and Koji Nakanishi, Centennial Professor of Chemistry, who won in 1996. “The goal of biomimetic chemistry is a large one—learn how to imitate the chemistry of life but using our own new chemistry,” said Breslow. “And that goal will not have been completely reached until we can make artificial cells that behave at least some of the properties of life itself.”

For more about Breslow and his research group, visit http://www.columbia.edu/ccm/chemistry/breslow

Mary Robinson speaks at SIPA


Low Library glows with projections of Lou Gehrig and the Columbia 250 shield.