Columbia Leads Universities in Licensing Income

Columbia was ranked highest in licensing income among major research universities in the 2002 fiscal year, according to a recent survey by the Association of University Technology Managers. Columbia garnered about $155.6 million in licensing fees, or about 15% of the nearly $1 billion earned by the 222 U.S. and Canadian institutions that participated in the survey.

The income comes from research by faculty and students leading to commercialization of inventions, drugs and software, as well as from licensing of inventions, drugs and software. The University of California system, which reports the revenues from its nine schools in one lump sum, ranked second, with $82 million. New York University came in third, reporting licensing income of $62.7 million.

French Prize for Danto

A nthony Danto, Emeritus John-sonian Professor of Philosophy at Columbia and long-time art critic for The Nation, was recently awarded the Prix Philosophie at the Pompidou Center in Paris for the French edition of his book, The Madonna of the Future: Essays in a Pluralistic Art World (University of Californ-ia Press, 2001). The collection of essays examines contemporary artists such as Nan Goldin and Bruce Nauman, 20th-century masters such as Picasso and Mark Rothko, as well as Old Masters like Vermeer and Tegolo. In a review of Danto’s book in The Philadelphia Inquirer, Carlino Romano wrote, “He has no peer in Amer-ican art criticism. He’s the one contempo-rary thinker about art that every intel-lectual interested in the subject must read.”

NYBH Awards Pollin Prize

N ew York-Presbyterian Hospital presented the second annual Pollin Prize in Pediatric Research on Dec. 19 to four scientists for their contributions in advancing the treatment of acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), the most common pediatric cancer. The prize was awarded to Emil Frei (Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston), Emil J. Freireich (the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center), Donald Pinkel (University of Southern California) and James F. Holland (Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York).

Every year the disease is diagnosed in more than 2,000 American children. Because of the physicians’ decades-long efforts, beginning in the 1950s, what was once an incurable disease now has a 75-per cent survival rate. ALL causes bone marrow to produce cancerous leukemia cells in place of healthy white and red blood cells, leaving the patient vulnerable to infection or uncontrolled bleeding.

The Pollin Prize, funded by the Linda and Kenneth Pollin Foundation, consists of a $100,000 award to the recipient and a $100,000 fellowship stipend to be awarded by the recipients to a young scientist at one of their institutions.

Soot Speeds Global Warming

New research from Columbia University and NASA scientists suggests that emissions of black soot alter the way in which sunlight reflects off snow, according to an article that appeared online recently in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. A computer simulation showed that black soot may be responsible for 25 percent of observed global warming over the past century. Soot in higher latitudes of the Earth, where ice is more common, absorbs more of the sun’s energy and warms than an icy, white background. Dark-colored black carbon or soot—which is generated from traffic, industrial pollution, outdoor fires and household burning of coal and biomass fuels—absorbs sunlight, while lighter-colored ice reflects sunlight.

Soot in areas with snow and ice may play an important role in climate change. Also, as snow and ice-covered areas begin melting, the warming effect increases, as the soot becomes more concentrated on the snow surface. “This provides posi-tive feedback (i.e., warming); as glaciers and ice sheets melt, they tend to get even dirtier,” said James Hansen, director of NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Stud-ies at Columbia.

Hansen and Larissa Nazarenko, both of the Goddard Institute and the Earth Institute, found soot’s effect on snow albedo (solar energy reflected back into space), which has been neglected in previous studies, may be contributing to trends toward early springs in the Northern hemisphere, thinning Arctic sea ice and melting glaciers and permafrost.

NEA Grants for the Arts

T he National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) last month awarded two separate grants to Columbia. The NEA will give $10,000 to a Miller Theatre environmental opera project, Neither/Erwartung, support-ing the first New York staging of Morton Feldman’s opera Neither on a double bill with Arnold Schoenberg’s Erwartung.

The NEA also awarded $7,500 to Teachers College to support the African Diaspora Film Festival, which will present more than 75 films from the United States and abroad. “These projects are a testament to the excel-lence, imagination, and creativity of our nation’s arts organizations and the millions of Americans we serve,” said Dana Gioia, chair of the arts endowment. The Miller Theatre also recently received a $100,000 capacity building grant from the Peter Jay Sharp Foundation as well as a $50,000 grant from the Francis Goelet Trust for new music programming.

Quotable

E ric Foner, DeWitt Clinton Professor of History, was a com-mentator during PBS’s two-part American Experience docu-mentary Reconstruction: The Second Civil War, broadcast Jan. 12 and 13. Among other subjects, he spoke about the Fourteenth Amend-ment. “This is the origin of the concept of civil rights in American society, rights which obtain to you as a citizen, which cannot be rescinded because of your race.” He elaborated by say-ing, “This really was a remarkable leap in the dark for world history. It was the first large scale experiment in interacial democracy that had existed anywhere.”