

THE CAJAL CLUB, 1947-1995¹

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The Cajal Club is an organization of neuroscientists that meets annually with the American Association of Anatomists (AAA) at the convention of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB). The Club was founded in 1947 by a group of 14 neuroanatomists who met at the Mount Royal Hotel in Montreal, Canada. Wendell J. Krieg hosted the initial gathering and is regarded as the individual who conceived of the Cajal Club. At that gathering it was agreed to meet each following year: (1) to revere Cajal, (2) to provide an opportunity for scientists with special interests in the nervous system to fraternize, and (3) to contribute to the welfare of neuroanatomy and neuroanatomists. The club was conceived as an informal union designed to accomplish these aims with a minimum of administration and regulative detail.

The officers elected at that meeting were named by titles drawn from neuroanatomical terminology. Wendell J. Krieg was voted to be the Nucleolus (President), Clement A. Fox was elected as the Nissl Body (Vice President) and Pinckney J. Harman was approved as the Apical Dendrite (Secretary/Treasurer). Because he had studied with Cajal, E. Horne Craigie was given the title of Axone to recognize that affiliation. He also was designated as the first honorary member. Later a club archivist was established, and Glenn V. Russell was elected as Alpha Helix to carry out its duties.

Since its beginnings almost fifty years ago the Cajal Club has met annually on the day

preceding the American Association of Anatomists meeting. Recently, when the AAA decided to affiliate with the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, a committee of past Cajal Club presidents was assembled to consider whether the Cajal Club should continue to meet with the anatomists in this new venue or join the more broadly based Society of Neuroscience. After considering the committee's recommendations, the membership voted to keep the Cajal Club's traditional arrangement with the anatomical association intact until the effect of the new alignment with the FASEB could be evaluated.

The early Cajal Club meetings consisted of a one-day gathering that included scientific sessions where members presented free papers on their research. The history of neurology was a topic for consideration, and reports on Cajal and his contributions were frequently given. Symposia and longer reviews of special interest to members and discussion on the teaching of neuroanatomy were presented at those meetings. In the afternoon a business meeting was held, and in the evening there was a banquet with a featured speaker. Among the banquet presenters during those early years were Raphael S. Lorente de No, Elizabeth C. Crosby, J. Z. Young, John Szentagothai, Walle Nauta and Berta and Ernst Scharrer. The banquet was replaced in 1970 by a socializer.

Two events occurred that highlighted the 1985 Cajal Club meeting that was held just prior to the international gathering of the Canadian and American Associations of Anatomists in Toronto. One was an outstanding reenactment by members in costume of the Cajal and Golgi acceptance speeches on the occasion of the 1906 Nobel Laureate awards. The other was the appearance at the meeting of Wendell Krieg. He stated that he had come out of retirement to

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announce that he was selling his beloved summer home, the Nautilus, located near Woods Hole, Massachusetts, and that he was donating the proceeds of the sale to the Cajal Club to establish awards to recognize outstanding research on the cerebral cortex.

Over the next two years in response to this generous bequest, the Cajal Club created an awards program, named in honor of Wendell Krieg, called the Krieg Cortical Kudos. This program is structured so that it recognizes, as Wendell Krieg had envisioned, several different levels of accomplishment. The Cortical Discoverer award is given to a senior neuroscientist who has contributed significantly to our knowledge of the cerebral cortex and/or its connections. The Cortical Explorer prize is awarded to scientists who are within 6 years of receipt of their advanced professional degrees for outstanding research on the region. Undergraduate students who are conducting exemplary investigation of the cerebrum receive the Cortical Scholar award. A fourth award, which is rarely given, named by Wendell Krieg the "Santiago's Brother" award, is bestowed to recognize a lifetime contribution to neurological research.

The prizes include receipt of the Cajal medal which was struck from a medallion crafted to commemorate Cajal's return to Madrid in 1907. It is presented to the winner of the Cortical Discoverer award and is the highest recognition by the Cajal Club for excellence in research. The recipient also is invited to publish an account of their research in *Cerebral Cortex*. They receive a certificate recognizing the award and a \$5000 honorarium. Cortical Explorers are given a certificate commemorating their selection and a \$3000 honorarium. The Cortical Scholar receives a similar certificate, a copy of the book, *Cajal on the Cerebral Cortex*, autographed by the authors, and a \$1000 honorarium.

Since 1987 the Cajal Club has presented 40 Krieg Cortical Kudos to scientists and predoctoral students from the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Hungary and Italy. By tradition the winners are invited to present an account of their research at the annual Cajal Club meeting. As a result the composition of our

gatherings now includes in addition to the symposia and free papers, the Krieg Awards Ceremony and presentations by the Krieg Cortical Kudos awardees.

The most recent Cajal Club meeting was held at the Georgia World Conference Center on April 10, 1995 in Atlanta, Georgia. The morning program started with a symposium entitled *Degeneration and Regeneration in the Spinal Cord* organized by Dr. Michael S. Beattie. The Krieg Awards Ceremony, chaired by Dr. Michael D. Gershon, the Nucleolus, followed after which there were presentations by the Cortical Scholar, Dr. S. Mark Williams from Yale University; the Cortical Explorer, Dr. Attila I. Gulyas of the Institute of Experimental Medicine in Budapest, Hungary; and the Cortical Discoverer, Dr. Leslie G. Ungerleider from the National Institute of Mental Health. A second symposium entitled *Migration and Differentiation of Cells from the Neural Crest* organized by Dr. Michael D. Gershon and Dr. Nicole Le Douarin was presented in the afternoon. Following this offering, Dr. Nicole Le Douarin presented the Twenty-Seventh Annual Pinckney J. Harman Memorial Lecture entitled *The Development of the Peripheral Nervous System*. A business meeting followed after which a joint Socializer with the AAA was held.

Information on the Cajal Club and applications for membership may be obtained by contacting David G. Whitlock, the Apical Dendrite, Department of Cellular and Structural Biology, Box-111, 4200 East Ninth Ave., Denver, Colorado, U.S.A., FAX: 1 303 270 4729.