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Brant Weinstein Named 2010 Judah Folkman Award Recipient

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The NAVBO Council, Meritorious Awards Committee and Scientific Advisory Board are pleased to recognize Dr. Brant Weinstein as the 2010 recipient of the Judah Folkman Award in Vascular Biology. This award recognizes outstanding contributions from vascular biologists who are at a mid-career level (within fifteen years of their first faculty appointment). Dr. Weinstein is Deputy Chief in the Program in Genomics of Development at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Bethesda, MD. He will present the Judah Folkman Award Lecture during the International Vascular Biology Meeting in Los Angeles, June 20-24, 2009 (exact date and time to be announced).

Dr. Weinstein holds a B.S. from the University of Michigan (1984) and received his Ph.D. with Frank Solomon in the Department of Biology at MIT in 1992. Following post-doctoral studies in the laboratory of Mark Fishman at Mass General Hospital, Brant joined the Unit on Vertebrate Organogenesis at NICHHD/NIH as an investigator. He assumed his current post as Deputy Chief in 2007.

Dr. Weinstein's research, focusing on how elaborate networks of blood and lymphatic vessels arise during vertebrate embryogenesis, has had a major impact on all of vascular biology. Understanding the formation of blood and lymphatic vessels has become a subject of intense clinical interest because of the roles played by both types of vessel in cancer and ischemia. Brant's laboratory has become the world leader in employing the zebrafish, a small tropical freshwater fish that possesses numerous features advantageous for studying vessel formation, as an experimental model. The fish is a genetically tractable vertebrate with a physically accessible, optically clear embryo. These features permit observation of every vessel in the living animal, as well as simple, rapid screening for even subtle vascular-specific mutants.

Dr. Weinstein made the first definitive maps of vascular development in zebrafish embryos, and then applied forward-genetics approaches to identify essential pathways for arterial – venous specification, branching morphogenesis, and lymphatic vessel development. His laboratory has pioneered the application of in vivo imaging techniques in living vertebrate embryos to study the fundamental processes of vascular lumen formation, guidance pathways in patterning of blood vessel networks, and migration behavior of blood and lymphatic vessel progenitors. His novel approaches to combine genetics and imaging have produced a consistent stream of highly visible publications in the top journals in our field. Like Judah Folkman, Brant is an excellent communicator and teacher who is highly sought after for featured talks at vascular biology meetings in the US and around the world.

Although this award is presented totally on the basis of scientific merit, Brant's ongoing support of NAVBO and the vascular biology community of scientists must also be noted. In 2004, along with Luisa Iruela-Arispe, Brant organized the pioneering Developmental Vascular Biology Workshop, and has continued to organize it ever since. As current President of the society, he is meeting the challenge of this very difficult economy and striving to expand NAVBO's contributions to the field of vascular biology.