

## **Dr. Bruce McCandliss Wins National PECASE Award**

The career of Dr. Bruce McCandliss, a psychologist at the Sackler Institute for Developmental Psychobiology and associate professor of psychology in psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College, is relatively young but already quite distinguished.

He is a highly productive, highly published scientist who has received several awards and honors for his professional breakthroughs. However, his most recent prize may be his greatest yet.

At a White House ceremony earlier last month, Dr. McCandliss received a commendation from the President of the United States in the form of a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE). The award is the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government upon outstanding scientists and engineers in the early part of their independent research careers.

The award recognizes Dr. McCandliss' research into the biological basis for language development and dysfunction in developmental disorders such as dyslexia.

Dr. McCandliss says that he is hopeful that this form of national recognition will help raise awareness of the importance of basic research on brain development and brain changes in learning so that it may improve education and remediation efforts.

Dr. McCandliss, along with educational researcher Isabel Beck, started Reading Works, a program that uses computer technology to teach reading skills based on insights from cognitive neuroscience research. The program aids New York City public school students who struggle with basic reading skills.

Having earned his B.S. degree in psychology with honors in 1989 from Michigan State University, Dr. McCandliss went on to earn his doctorate in cognitive psychology from the University of Oregon in 1997. Dr. McCandliss began his work at the Sackler Institute in 1999 having come from the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University, where he served as a postdoctoral research scientist at the Center for Neural Basis of Cognition as well as the director of the Learning Research and Development Center Reading Institute.

"Bruce McCandliss is notable not only for his intelligence and hard work, but for his deep concern for people who have difficulties with attention and language," said Dr. Michael Posner, a professor of psychology in psychiatry at the Sackler Institute, and one of Dr. McCandliss' mentors. "He wants to make a difference in the lives of children and his research gives every promise that he will succeed in doing just that. He is also a wonderful colleague and teacher with an admirable willingness to share his skills with others."

The Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers was established in 1996 and honors the most promising researchers in the nation within their fields.

Dr. McCandliss was the sole nominee for this award from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, and one of only 12 scientists selected across all branches of the

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National Institutes for Health. Nationwide, a total of 56 awards were granted, representing nine government agencies spanning all fields of science and engineering.

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## **Your Table Is Ready: Griffis Faculty Club Reopens After Renovation**

For the better part of a year, Taasha Ramsay has had to scramble all over the city to stage luncheons, receptions and dinners for the physicians, faculty and administrators of Weill Cornell Medical College and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center.

Ramsay, the manager of the Griffis Faculty Club, had to get creative—hosting events in private homes and at the Weill Greenberg Center—while the club underwent an 11-month renovation.

November 27 marked the end of Ramsay's scrambling days, as the ribbon was officially cut on the re-imagined Griffis Faculty Club.

"When you don't have a faculty club, you realize how much you miss it," said Dr. David Hajjar, dean of the Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences.

Not only a place for faculty to enjoy lunch or an after-work cocktail with a colleague, the Griffis Faculty Club also serves as an important fund-raising venue for dinners, receptions and meetings that include the Weill Cornell Overseers, Hospital Trustees, and others.

During his remarks, Dr. Hajjar recounted how a chat over breakfast at Griffis with Vice Provost of Development Larry Schafer helped spark the project.

"We realized we really needed to do something about the club," Dr. Hajjar said. "It had clearly seen better days."

The Griffis Faculty Club was established in 1962 when Stanton Griffis made a generous donation to have a club built in the honor of his daughter, Theodora Griffis, who had been a patient at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Hospital.

Once a dim, dark-wood-paneled club with an inadequate kitchen, Griffis has been reinvented as an open, bright space with a new bar, kitchen and a smaller, private dining area for more intimate gatherings.

When the time came to actually design the club's interior, Dr. Hajjar relied on two women whose tastes were perhaps more trusted than his own: Joan Weill and Anita Gotto. "Tony Gotto and Sandy Weill's wives set the tone for the new club, and they did a brilliant job."

Now complete, the club's role in the Medical College and Hospital has become more evident than ever.

"We realized what a valuable and indispensable role it plays in our institution," said Dr. Antonio Gotto, dean of the Medical College.

"It's part of the lifeblood of this institution and this renovation was sorely needed," said Dr. Steven J. Corwin, executive vice president and COO of NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital.

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"The current renovations are more than a face-lift on this distinguished club," said Dr. Allan Gibofsky, who sits on the club's board, "but rather an attempt to bring the club into the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

Similar to faculty clubs in major medical schools throughout the country, Griffis will be busy in the coming months.

"We have parties booked from early December into 2008," Taasha Ramsay said. "We are going to be hopping."

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## Awards & Honors

**Dr. Richard Silver**, professor of medicine, served as chairman of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Patient Symposium on Myeloproliferative Diseases, held Nov. 7 in New York City. In addition, Dr. Silver spoke on treatment of polycythemia vera (PV), a myeloproliferative disorder that produces excess red blood cells. The symposium was sponsored by the Myeloproliferative Disorders Foundation and the Cancer Treatment and Research Fund (CR&T). Dr. Silver founded CR&T, a non-profit group supporting medical professionals dedicated to research for the treatment of cancer, in 1968 and serves as its vice president.

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