

**1998 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD
JOHN A. RESKO**

The Distinguished Service Award, sponsored by Serono Laboratories, Inc., recognizes an individual who has demonstrated unselfish service and leadership in advancing the discipline of reproductive biology. The scientist selected in 1998 to be most eminently qualified and deserving of this award is John A. Resko.

Dr. Resko received his A.B. degree in Philosophy from St. Charles Overbrook University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1956 and an M.S. degree in Zoology from Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1960. Dr. Resko received his Ph.D. degree in Animal Science from the University of Illinois in 1963. He completed his doctoral research in the laboratory of A.V. Nalbandov, studying the endocrine regulation of the avian adrenal gland, the results of which were published in *Endocrinology* in 1964. In a series of classical endocrinological experiments involving hypophysectomy, transplantation of the anterior pituitary gland, and measurements of corticosterone in adrenal vein plasma, definitive data was collected demonstrating that steroid production by the adrenal gland of the bird was regulated by ACTH produced by the anterior pituitary gland and that adrenal regulation in avian species was similar to mammals. Since steroid measurements had not been performed in this laboratory previously, the validation and use of the corticosterone assay was also an accomplishment of his thesis project.

After graduate school, Dr. Resko was accepted into the Steroid Training Program in the Biochemistry Department in the School of Medicine at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. During this time he trained with some of the outstanding steroid researchers of the time including Leo Samuels, Kristen Eik-Nes, O.V. Dominguez, and Alter Weist. In 1966, using gas chromatography with electron capture detection, Resko and Eik-Nes clearly demonstrated a diurnal variation in testosterone concentrations in the systemic circulation of men.

In 1964, Resko was recruited to the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center in Beaverton, Oregon, where he collaborated over the next 16 years on many important observations regarding the secretion of steroid hormones in fetal and adult monkeys (and rodents as well) and their relationships to reproductive behaviors and gonadotropin release. While at the Primate Center, Dr. Resko advanced to the rank of Professor by 1977.

From 1981 to 1995, Dr. Resko served as Chairman of the Department of Physiology at the Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU) in Portland, during which time he nurtured and mentored the careers of several young faculty members and, for the past 20 years, served as Principal Investigator of an interdisciplinary NIH Training Grant for pre- and postdoctoral trainees in

Reproductive Biology involving the departments of Cell and Developmental Biology, and Physiology and Pharmacology, as well as the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center. He taught Endocrine Physiology to first-year medical students for over 25 years until a new interdisciplinary curriculum was initiated in 1994, which he directed. The department flourished under his leadership, and he designed and supervised the construction of a new building for research. In 1996 he was appointed Chairman of the newly merged Department of Physiology and Pharmacology in the School of Medicine at OHSU.

Dr. Resko pioneered the application of biochemical techniques for understanding reproductive behaviors. He utilized the technique of gas chromatography with electron capture detection for the measurement of progesterone, testosterone, and androstenedione in tissue and sera before techniques for the measurement of steroid hormones by radioimmunoassay were developed, and correlated these levels with physiological functions such as estrous behavior. Early in his career, Dr. Resko understood the importance of collaborations between endocrinologists and behavioral scientists. He collaborated with experimental psychologists, providing knowledge of steroid biochemistry for experiments that could not have been completed without his expertise. In addition, he developed antisera for all the major classes of steroid hormones, which he has provided to numerous laboratories. His laboratory was also instrumental in the development of a specific antisera for GnRH, which is used throughout the world for immunocytochemistry and radioimmunoassay. Recently, his laboratory has developed and provided a cDNA probe for the measurement of androgen receptor and aromatase mRNA in brains of rats and rhesus macaques.

Dr. Resko and his colleagues have published over 138 peer-reviewed scientific papers in many prestigious journals, encompassing studies in laboratory and domestic animals as well as in nonhuman primates. His research career, characterized by continuous funding from the NIH, has made him an international authority on the actions of sex steroids in the fetal brain and the neuroendocrine control of gonadotropin secretion. Dr. Resko has been a most encouraging mentor of several individuals who now hold senior positions in academia and industry. His simple advice of "do good work and everything else will take care of itself" was heeded and respected by those he mentored.

Dr. Resko is among an elite few who have demonstrated outstanding dedication and service to the scientific community and especially to promoting the discipline of reproductive biology. He has a long record of participation on editorial boards, including *Biology of Reproduction*, *Proceedings of the Society of Experimental Biology and Medicine*, *Endocrinology*, and *Advances in*

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Sex Hormone Research. It is unusual for an individual to be called upon for leadership in multiple societies; in this regard, Dr. Resko's career is particularly noteworthy. He has held important positions of responsibility in several major societies including the Society for the Study of Reproduction, the Endocrine Society, the American Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine, and the American Physiological Society. He has served on NIH study sections and been an advisor and consultant to a wide variety of research programs throughout the country.

His distinguished service is most evident through his dedication and contributions to the Society for the Study of Reproduction. He was a Charter Member and has been one its most ardent supporters, serving on almost every committee of the society. He has also had the dubious honor of serving on the Local Arrangements Committee not once, but twice. He continued to shape the society through his leadership when elected to the Board of Directors in 1981 and as President in 1988. Dr. Resko is the epitome of the volunteer spirit that provides the energy for ensuring the success of the SSR and for enriching the field of reproductive biology.

Over more than three decades, Dr. Resko has been able to combine extended service as Chair of the Department of Physiology, service to the scientific community, and a program of continuously funded NIH-sponsored research. Throughout his exemplary career, he remains the kind of leader who always has time to help his colleagues, community, and friends no matter what the cause. His life and career serve as an example of how to excel while remaining a caring and compassionate human being. The Distinguished Service Award is a tribute to Dr. John Resko's lifelong commitment and dedication to the scientific community.