



## SSR Distinguished Service Award

*(Supported by EMD Serono Research Institute)*

The SSR Distinguished Service Award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated unselfish service and leadership in advancing the discipline of reproductive biology. The recipient of the 2010 SSR Distinguished Service Award is **Robert C. Burghardt, Ph.D.**

The recipient of the 2010 Distinguished Service Award is Dr. Robert C. Burghardt. Dr. Burghardt is Professor of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences, Toxicology, Reproductive Biology, and Biotechnology at Texas A&M University. He received the B.S in Zoology from the University of Michigan, the M.S. and Ph.D. in Biology from Wayne State University and postdoctoral training in Reproductive Biology at Harvard Medical School under the mentorship of Dr. Everett Anderson. He joined the faculty of Texas A&M University in 1978. At Texas A&M University, Dr. Burghardt has profoundly influenced many professional lives as Director of the Image Analysis Laboratory in the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, as Chair of the Interdisciplinary Faculty of Toxicology, and as Associate Director of the Center for Environmental and Rural Health. In addition, Dr. Burghardt's personal research and unselfish sharing of expertise has created the synergies that have enhanced many research and graduate education programs at Texas A&M University including the Superfund Basic Research Program, Faculty of Toxicology, Faculty of Reproductive Biology, and Center for Animal Biotechnology and Genomics. His national and international stature as a research scientist contributes to his considerable success in mentoring graduate students. He has served as chair or cochair of 22 graduate student programs, as a member of 30 graduate supervisory committees, and as a mentor to 8 postdoctoral fellows. In addition, he has served as PI or Co-PI of numerous grants for

equipment, research, and teaching that have greatly enriched the academic environment at Texas A&M University.

Dr. Burghardt adheres to the philosophy that mentoring is the most challenging and usually the most rewarding outcome of a commitment to transfer the essence of scientific inquiry and independent thinking. He lives this philosophy by providing a positive example of an exceptional work ethic along with the highest standard of scholarship, independent inquiry, and scientific integrity. For these reasons, Dr. Burghardt is a valued mentor of graduate students and serves on graduate committees from many colleges and departments at Texas A&M. He is unbelievably generous with his time in undertaking the review of research proposals, research protocols, and evaluating results of research for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. Indeed, the trainees affectionately refer to him as our "Mother Theresa" of life sciences programs for his unselfish commitment of time and effort in helping others. Dr. Burghardt encourages graduate students to go well beyond their perceived personal limitations in research, by example. Indeed, he is a "hallmark personality" of a scientific leader for research and graduate education.

Dr. Burghardt's research and graduate education focuses on understanding how cells interact, function, and communicate. Successful pregnancies require that the conceptus

(embryo/fetus and its membranes) and the uterus communicate to allow nutrients, hormones, growth factors, cytokines, and other elements to stimulate development and growth necessary for birth of healthy offspring. His research has identified key molecules responsible for establishment and maintenance of pregnancy, as well as for myometrial functions associated with labor and birth of healthy babies. He has been author or co-author of over 205 papers in refereed scientific journals, as well as numerous chapters in books, presentations at scientific meetings, invited presentations internationally and nationally. His research has been funded by many grants from several federal agencies, in the amount of approximately \$16 million since 1980.

Dr. Burghardt's record of service to benefit members of the Society for the Study of Reproduction is truly exceptional. He served on numerous editorial boards and grant review panels for NIH, NCI, USDA, and EPA, along with state selection committees for more than ten years, a large voluntary commitment. Dr. Burghardt also has an exceptionally productive record of service directly to SSR as: Associate Editor, *Biology of Reproduction*, 1992-1995; Referring Editor, *Biology of Reproduction*, 2001-2004; Chair, Strategic Planning Committee, 2008-2009; Chair, Publications Committee 1996 to 2000; and Co-Chair of the Publications Committee for 2005-2008. Under his leadership, the Publications Committee developed the proposal for and selected HighWire Press for

production of *Biology of Reproduction* on the World Wide Web beginning July 1998. His committee was also responsible for selection of Editor-in-Chief and Associate Editors for 1999-2004 and Editors-in-Chief for 2009-2013. He has served as Chair of the Awards Committee, 2004-2005; Member, Strategic Planning Committee, 2003-2004; Chair, Strategic Planning Subcommittee for *Biology of Reproduction*, 2003-2004; Member, Awards Committee, 2003-2004; and Member, Board of Directors, 2000-2003; Chair, *Ad hoc* Committee appointed by SSR President to develop recommendations for upgrading SSR website, 2005-2006; and Member, Local Arrangements Committee, 1998. Dr. Burghardt developed, with a counterpart from the American Association for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM), a Speaker Exchange program recognizing the SSR New Investigator Award and corresponding research award winner from ASRM at each other's annual meeting.

In summary, Dr. Burghardt is a valuable colleague whose dedication to service, mentoring of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, leadership roles in the service of the SSR, and numerous contributions to sciences from a very successful and productive career in research meet every criteria for the SSR Distinguished Service Award. He is highly deserving of this recognition as recipient of the SSR's 2010 Distinguished Service Award (*Submitted by Drs. Fuller W. Bazer and Bruce D. Murphy*).