New Milestones in Microbiology Site Named in New Orleans

The Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine has been designated as ASM's newest Milestone in Microbiology site. The ASM Milestones program has been designed to recognize institutions and the scientists who worked there that have made significant contributions toward advancing the science of microbiology. By placing explanatory plaques at these sites, ASM hopes to increase professional and public recognition of the significance of the science of microbiology. Other Milestone sites include Hopkins Marine Laboratory in Monterey, Calif.; the Laboratory of Hygiene at the University of Pennsylvania; the laboratory of Selman Waksman at Rutgers University; and the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

This distinguished School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine is the oldest school of public health in the country and the only American school of tropical medicine. The School will celebrate the centennial of its establishment in 2012. Concern with endemic malaria and deadly epidemics of cholera and yellow fever in Louisiana stimulated early research here on tropical diseases, leading to the establishment of the Medical College of Louisiana in 1834 to combat their devastating effects throughout the South. In 1912, Samuel Zemurray provided funds to establish the nation's first School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the foundation for today's institution.

Since that time, the work of numerous Tulane researchers on tropical diseases caused by bacteria, fungi, protozoa, and viruses has enriched the study of tropical medicine and contributed to the amelioration of suffering throughout the world. For example, faculty member Paul C. Beaver carried out definitive work on the transmission and pathogenesis of hookworm infestation; Dean Stanford Challie served as president of the Havana Yellow Fever Commission in 1879-1880; Rudolf Matas was one of the first in the U.S. to promote Carlos Finlay's theory that mosquitoes were the transmitters of yellow fever and initiated the practice of using screens and netting over patients in hospital wards; Charles Franklin-Craig perfected the complement-fixation test for amebiasis and wrote the important texts Laboratory Diagnosis of Protozoan Diseases and Clinical Parasitology; and faculty member Charles C. Bass did pioneering work in parasitology by culturing the malaria parasite. Bass is also known as the "father of preventive dentistry" because of his study of microorganisms in human saliva, which, when combined with plaque, cause tooth decay. He advocated daily removal of oral bacteria through proper use of a toothbrush and dental floss, making him the first to describe effective oral hygiene.

Many of the School faculty have served as presidents of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH), and two, Ernest Faust and Paul Beaver, have received the Walter Reed Medal of the ASTMH.

"The public health programs of the School are renowned worldwide," said ASM President Bonnie Bassler, who made the presentation. "We are especially pleased to recognize the Tulane school as it begins to celebrate its centennial, marking a century of commitment to global health."


Scroll Down to see the Milestones Plaque
MILESTONES IN MICROBIOLOGY SITE
FIRST U.S. SCHOOL OF TROPICAL MEDICINE

In Louisiana, concern with endemic malaria and deadly epidemics of yellow fever stimulated early work on tropical diseases, leading to the establishment of the Medical College of Louisiana in 1834 in order to formalize research on these diseases.

In 1912, Samuel Zemurray provided funds to establish the nation’s first School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and laid the groundwork for today’s Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.

Since that time, the work of numerous Tulane researchers on tropical diseases caused by bacteria, fungi, protozoa, and viruses has enriched the study of tropical medicine and contributed to the amelioration of suffering throughout the world.

In recognition of these accomplishments, the American Society for Microbiology honors the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine as a Milestone in Microbiology site.

- Dedicated May 21, 2011