

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT
CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSIOLOGY AND
BIOPHYSICS

MARK R. LAMBRECHT AWARD
FOR SCHOLARSHIP AND
COMMITMENT

1990 - 2018

Chicago, Illinois

November, 2008

Dear Lambrecht Family,

It has been almost two decades since the Mark Lambrecht Award for Scholarship and Commitment was first established in our department. During this time, more than 20 graduate students have received this award, and I can assure you that it has made an everlasting impact in the careers of every single one of them.

The Lambrecht Award is far more than a distinction for the students. It has helped advance the mission of our department: to promote and create knowledge with a vigorous and successful program in teaching and research. With your support, we have been able to accomplish that.

To recognize the immeasurable contribution you have made to research and education of graduate students and to express our most sincere gratitude, the recipients of the Lambrecht Award and I have created this album. As you will see on each page, Mark's memory has transcended beyond UIC as his name is carried forward in the résumé of each student, many of which are now established investigators and teachers in different universities.

Your support is truly appreciated by every one in the department.



With warmest regards,

Jesús García-Martínez, M.D., Ph.D.
Director of Graduate Studies

1990 – MARK S. BARTHELT, C.P.A.



I am honored to have been the first recipient of the Mark R. Lambrecht Award for Scholarship and Commitment. I still fondly remember the days working for the department, and sincerely appreciate the opportunity given to me. Since graduating from UIC in 1993, I went on to join a public accounting firm, eventually becoming an audit manager, specializing in long-term care. I left public accounting after seven years to become Assistant Controller at Royal Management Corporation, a large multi-facility long-term care and assisted living management company, where I stayed for five years. I have since joined Royal's sister company, Merit Healthcare Management (which specializes in Home Health Care, Hospice, Private Duty and Sleep Diagnostics) to become Controller. I was responsible for all of Merit's distinct programs for about three years, and was just recently named VP of Finance for the Sleep program. I married Kathleen, whom I met at UIC, in June 2005, and together we have a beautiful daughter Jessica, soon be to 8.

My days of working with the Department of Physiology and Biophysics, and winning the award, gave me experiences and taught me lessons that have stayed with me my entire career. Dr. Colbern hired me to assist the department with computers and technology, and at that time, I didn't even know how to turn a computer on. Through the encouragement of her, Dr. Hales, and too many others to name here, I learned an incredible amount. Mainly, ignorance is not an excuse – only through hard work, dedication, and commitment to learn, can one become better.

I congratulate other past winners of this award, and encourage all to dedicate themselves, in the spirit of Mark Lambrecht, to commit to nothing short of excellence in everything that they do.

Mark S. Barthelt, CPA
Lisle, Illinois

1992 – KAREN L. BALL, PH.D.



After completing post-doctoral work with Sarah Hitchcock-DeGregori at UMDNJ, I accepted a faculty position at my alma mater, Alma College, a private liberal arts institution in Alma Michigan. Now in my fourteenth year, I am currently an Associate Professor of Exercise and Health Science. My primary teaching responsibilities include Human Physiology, Pharmacology, and an Advanced Muscle Physiology course that incorporates the use of cell culture to study the process of myogenesis. It is this laboratory that has also been the recent focus of research work, all of which involves active participation of my undergraduate students. In my time at Alma I have been awarded the Junior Faculty Outstanding Teaching Award in 2000 and in 2007 was awarded the Joel Barlow Award for Faculty Excellence. In addition to teaching responsibilities (certainly the major emphasis at an undergraduate institution such as Alma) and laboratory work, I have served in a multitude of institutional support positions. These have included many faculty search committees (both science and non-science disciplines), the Faculty Personnel Committee, serving as Assistant Provost from 2003-2005, and currently serving as Faculty Athletics Representative to the NCAA. It is wonderful to be able to provide comments for this collection to be presented to the Lambrecht family. As a student who worked with Mark, I understood the great respect he had earned throughout the department. It was an incredible honor for me to have been named a recipient of this award and so I can honestly state that the Mark A. Lambrecht Award is that recognition of which I am most proud.

1993 – SHEELA G. BHARTUR, PH.D., M.D.



I cannot tell you how honored I was to have received the Lambrecht Award. It was with a great sense of sorrow, though, since the family had been through so much in losing their young boy. The award had a profound influence in that it was truly humbling. This was not an award you sought, but something that was bestowed in recognition. It left me wondering as to what exactly I had done to deserve it, and then left me wanting to do more and give back in order to be deserving of it-so in that sense, it was highly motivational. I am thankful to Dr. Meena Rao, my advisor, who played a great role in shaping me. I remember with fondness Dr. Ferguson who was so profuse in his congratulatory remarks; it is too bad that we lost him.

Since I obtained my Ph.D., I did a short visiting fellowship at the National Centre for Biological Sciences in Bangalore, India, returned to the U.S.A. for a post-doctoral position at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta, GA, got interested in medicine at the same time and pursued an M.D. degree, did a residency in Internal Medicine (internship at the Cleveland Clinic, OH and the remaining 2 years at the University of Tennessee in Nashville), a fellowship in Nuclear Medicine (at UNC Chapel Hill), and am currently a PET physician at the Biomedical Research Foundation in Shreveport, LA.

1994 – KIMBERLY A. PALMITER, PH.D.



Mark was my dear friend and it was an honor to receive the Lambrecht award established in his name. My training as a research scientist has afforded me many wonderful opportunities. I think Mark would be pleased to know that I am happy and healthy, living in Seattle, WA with my husband Ryan and my 5-year old son Justin. I am currently working as a Grant and Contract Administrator at the University of Washington. Some might say this is an unusual position for someone with my training however I couldn't be more satisfied with my job. I make a difference to UW faculty/scientists everyday by helping them present their ideas in grant proposals and by facilitating awards so that they can accomplish their research goals. In the spirit of the Lambrecht award, scholarship and commitment: I am committed to science and the pursuit of it whether from the bench or from the office and I am fortunate to be able to continue my scholarly endeavors by attending UW Physiology and Biophysics seminars and by learning the "business of science" through practical application.

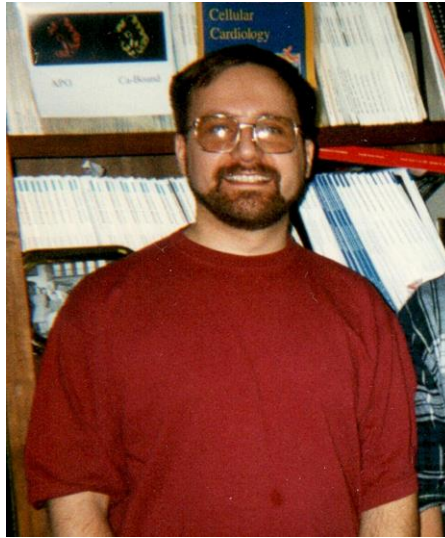
1995 – EDWARD B. ARIAS, PH.D.



My years as a PhD candidate at the UIC Department of Physiology & Biophysics were among the most exciting and rewarding of my life. The faculty, being most extraordinary and internationally renowned, set the academic bar of excellence high but in a most motivating and fair manner. I'll never forget the physio seminars followed by lunch with the presenters as well as the great camaraderie that existed among the graduate students. The faculty (including affiliate faculty), staff and fellow students will always be an integral part of my scientific life. Aside from the pleasurable memories of those years, graduate school is a time constantly of pushing one's academic limits and there are often awards given for various categories. Being selected for the Mark Lambrecht Award was particularly rewarding because it was more of a subjective award given by faculty members to a student who demonstrates a leadership role in their respective environment.

Since graduating in 1997, I have been working with Dr. Greg Cartee on skeletal muscle glucose metabolism, initially as a post-doctoral fellow at UW-Madison and continuing as a lab manager and colleague here at UM. Together, we now operate the Muscle Biology Laboratory in the Division of Kinesiology at the University of Michigan. We currently have a 10+ person lab including a post-doc, 4 Ph.D. candidates, a M.Sc. candidate, and various undergraduate student assistant. I still use anecdotes from my graduate years and try to mentor our ever-changing lab personnel using the training I learned at UIC.

1996 – MIROSLAV O. STOJANOVIC, M.D.



Miroslav Stojanovic, known in the department as Mikki, was born on February 15, 1965 in Kregujevac, Yugoslavia. He received his M.D. in May 1990 from the College of Medicine, University of Belgrade. He was one of the best students in his class and graduated with a 9.72 GPA out of 10. During his years as a medical student, he enjoyed basic science courses including physiology, pharmacology, biochemistry and immunology. Before joining the Department of Physiology and Biophysics at UIC, he spent some time working at the Department of Surgery at the Hospital Central de la Cruz Roja Espanola, Madrid, Spain and in the Department of Gynecology, University of Tel-Aviv, Medical Center Kfar-Saba, Israel. In 1992 Mikki was accepted into the Ph.D. program of the Department of Physiology and Biophysics at the University of Illinois at Chicago. From the first moment it was clear that Mikki would be an outstanding student. In 1994 Mikki started his research in Dr. R. J. Solaro's laboratory. He was serious while doing his research, but at the same time he was always joking and making the lab a fun place to be. He was awarded a University Fellowship for the 1995-96 and 1996-97 Academic Years. In 1996 as a graduate student he received the Mark. R. Lambrecht Award for Scholarship and Commitment. After completing all requirements for his Ph.D. except for defending his thesis, Mikki moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, and began his residency in Emergency Medicine at Butterworth Hospital, Grand Rapids, MI. He and his wife Shari were killed September 3, 1998, in a car crash on their sixth wedding anniversary. That same year Miroslav received the Kate Barany Award posthumously.

(Narrative and picture provided by Beata Wolska, Ph.D.)

1997 – MICHAEL C. RISK, M.D., PH.D.



I received the Mark R. Lambrecht Award in 1997, and later graduated from the University of Illinois with an MD/PhD degree in 2003. I received the Mark R. Lambrecht Award early in my graduate work, and to me the award was both an honor and an impetus to continue my research pursuits. Basic science research in general requires not only intellectual curiosity, but also commitment, as it can at times seem frustrating and futile. The Lambrecht Award provides encouragement to those who need it most, at a time when interest often exceeds achievement, and provides an early reward for those dedicated to a research career.

Since graduation from the University of Illinois, I have been a resident in Urology at the University of Washington in Seattle, and currently am a chief resident in my final year of residency. I have continued my interest in research, and we have a research year as part of residency which allowed me to pursue that further in the field of prostate carcinogenesis. After completion of residency, I will be a fellow in Urologic Oncology at Indiana University, and my first year of fellowship will be continuing ongoing research on gene therapy for kidney cancer, which we hope to translate into clinical trials in the next 1-2 years.

1998 - JAYASHREE VENKATASUBRAMANIAN, PH.D.



I received the Mark Lambrecht Award for Excellence and Dedication in Science in 1998 and this has been a stepping stone to many more rewards and a successful academic career. I graduated from University of Illinois (UIC), Chicago in 1999, with a doctoral degree in Physiology. Following this I worked as a post-doctoral research fellow in the College of Medicine, UIC, until March 2001. Health complications associated with the birth of my second child resulted in terminating this appointment. The flexibility of part-time teaching was most ideal and helped me pursue my passion for teaching, stay in touch with the field of science, and also devote time to my family.

I am currently a Visiting Research Assistant Professor at University of Illinois and an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Biology at Benedictine University and Aurora University and Department of Health and Life Sciences at Waubensee Community College (WCC). I am also a Learning Enhancement Specialist at WCC. I teach various courses in Biology including Human Physiology, Anatomy and Physiology to Pre-medical students and Pathophysiology to nursing students.

As a researcher, I work on examining the second messenger signaling involved in regulation of chloride secretion in mammalian epithelial cells and also in yeast cells. The major emphasis is on the gastrointestinal tract, where such studies help elucidate the basis of diseases ranging from infectious diarrheas to inflammatory bowel disease and cystic fibrosis.

1999 – DAVID E. MONTGOMERY, M.D., PH.D.



Since earning my doctoral degree in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics, I have continued to pursue a career in academic medicine. I am currently completing a cardiology fellowship/physician-scientist training program at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. My research interests have been broadened to include investigation of the cardiovascular system as a whole, with particular focus on translational questions. Under the tutelage of Dr. Douglas Vaughan, I am studying the role of the plasminogen activator inhibitor (PAI-1), a key regulator of the fibrinolytic system, in ischemic cardiovascular disease. In particular, I am looking at how PAI-1 modulates the vascular and myocardial housekeeping process after ischemic injury. My overall career goal is to merge my clinical and research pursuits to help further our understanding of the patient with atherosclerotic coronary and peripheral artery disease. As a clinical cardiologist, I will specialize in percutaneous, as well as novel medical approaches to this common disease entity.

I have always treasured my Lambrecht award. I keep it mounted in the center of other diplomas and awards because it reminds me that there simply is no substitute for compassion and charity. I thank the Lambrecht family for allowing us to celebrate Mark's compassionate life throughout the years.

2000 – BETH A. NARDULLI, PH.D.



Although I have taken a temporary break from my career in science it is definitely something that I look forward to going back to. At this time I am doing what I believe to be the most important “job” of my life---raising my two and a half year old son, Jack, who will be joined by his younger sister in the very near future. In addition, I continue to serve as President of the non-profit organization my husband and I started which provides holiday presents to more than 1,500 underprivileged Chicago Public School students each year. The characteristics emphasized by the Lambrecht award are ones I believe to be important and relevant in all aspects of life. I am still honored that I was chosen as a recipient of this award and continue to try live up to its ideals.

2001 – ROLI PRASAD, PH.D.



When I received the Mark R. Lambrecht Award on November 15, 2001, it was a great honor for me because it not only indicated that the faculty felt my achievements were worthy of recognition but also because the award paid tribute to such an exceptional young man. Mark's unfulfilled dream of pursuing higher education, the warm memories of those who knew him, and the dedication of his family had a deep impact on me when I received the award; these feelings, and the tragedy of Sept. 11 just two months earlier, reinforced in me the beliefs that life and family are extremely precious. The award also inspired in me the realization that education is a gift and that knowledge is a treasure that must be shared with others. Consequently, the Mark R. Lambrecht Award solidified in me the desire to pursue a career in teaching. In recent years, I have been teaching as an adjunct faculty at Benedictine University in Lisle, IL, and at North Central College in Naperville, IL. I thoroughly enjoy teaching and love the interaction with my students. I am sorry that I never had the opportunity to meet Mark, but I hope that my efforts will touch another spirit such as Mark's and will enable others like him to achieve their dreams. If I am able to realize this goal, I will feel that I have truly succeeded and have earned the Mark R. Lambrecht Award.

2002 - EILEEN M. BURKART, PH.D.



I was incredibly honored to receive the Mark Lambrecht Award in 2002. While a graduate student, I saw the Lambrecht family attend the awards ceremony every year and I was, and still am, touched by the way they honor Mark's memory and his time spent at UIC. Each year when Dr. Jaffe kindly sends photographs from the awards ceremony, I remember Mark, think of his family, and am reminded of our commitment to science and community. I would like to thank the Lambrechts again for their generosity and wish them my very best.

After finishing my PhD in cardiac physiology with Dr. Solaro in June 2003, I began my post-doctoral fellowship at the Center for Cardiovascular Research at Washington University in St. Louis. Through a grant with the American Heart Association I conducted research related to diabetic cardiomyopathy and cardiac and skeletal muscle metabolism. I spent almost 4 years at Wash U that were great for my development as a scientist. The next phase of my life started on lucky 07-07-07 when my husband TJ and I were married surrounded by our family and friends, including many from UIC. (For those of you who don't know – Dr. and Mrs. Solaro are fantastic dancers!) Since then, I have moved back to Chicago and began a new career at Abbott Laboratories in the dyslipidemia therapeutic area. In May, TJ and I were blessed with the birth of our daughter, Laurel Mei Hartman. This has been an exciting time for us.

2003 – RASHAD J. BELIN, PH.D.



After completing my doctoral degree in 2005, I worked as a postdoctoral fellow at Northwestern University in the Departments of Preventive Medicine and Cardiology. While there, I published one first author review article and am currently completing studies focusing on: i) novel risk factors for congestive heart failure and atrial fibrillation and ii) molecular mechanisms mediating atrial myocyte remodeling in atrial fibrillation. Last year, I presented some of my research at the American Heart Association Scientific Sessions. In 2007, I received a full academic scholarship to the University of Chicago, Pritzker School of Medicine. Currently, I am a 2nd year M.D. candidate expecting to graduate in 2011. I serve as the President of the University of Chicago chapter of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) and as a voting member of the regional board of the SNMA. I was selected recently as one of a few students citywide to receive the Cook County Physician's Association Scholarship. I plan on becoming a translational cardiologist and live on the south side of Chicago with my wife-Traci and our two sons: Jalen and Aidan.

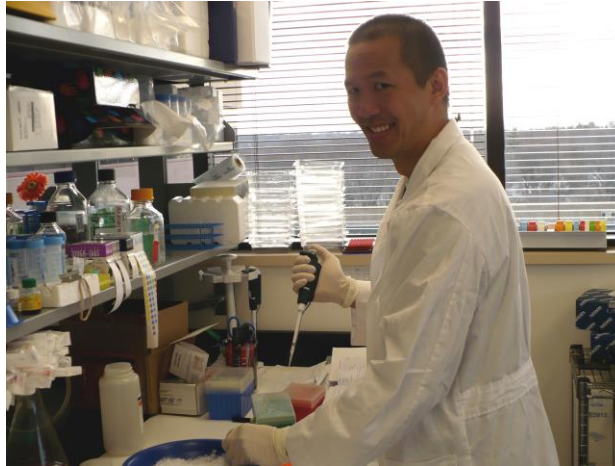
Being the 2003 recipient of the Mark Lambrecht Award for Scholarship and Commitment was a powerful impetus for me to continue my academic and service endeavors knowing that they were valued by my peers, colleagues, professors, and the entire Department of Physiology and Biophysics. I am very grateful to the Lambrecht family and it is an honor to be one of the many recipients of the Mark Lambrecht Award. I thank you and may God continue to bless you and your family.

2004 - JOHN ALLEN, PH.D.



I recently completed my graduate studies at UIC and was the recipient of the Mark Lambrecht Award in 2004. I successfully defended my doctoral thesis in October of 2007. My research was performed in Dr. Mark Rasenick's laboratory (see photo of John and Dr. Rasenick at his thesis defense celebration). My dissertation research focused on understanding the biochemical process of cellular communication; namely study of the biochemical actions of the hormones adrenaline and testosterone. I am currently completing a post-doctoral research fellowship with Dr. Bryan Roth's laboratory in the Department of Pharmacology at the University of North Carolina (UNC) School of Medicine, Chapel Hill, NC. I recently received a two-year grant award and began a training fellowship with the UNC-Neurodevelopmental Disorders Research Center. My current research studies serotonin and serotonin receptors and their pathological involvement in the diseases schizophrenia and Coffin-Lowry syndrome. I am also actively involved in learning drug discovery technology and performing drug screening through the National Institutes of Mental Health-Psychoactive Drug Screening Program (see <http://pdsp.med.unc.edu/indexR.html>). My long-term career goal is to research and develop new drug therapeutics for treating psychiatric and neurological diseases as well as further our understanding of the underlying causes of mental illnesses. I send a sincere thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Lambrecht for their support of UIC Physiology graduate students and consider the Mark Lambrecht Award the greatest honor I received during my graduate education.

2005 – STEVEN WU, PH.D.



Previous to my graduate career in the Department of Physiology at UIC, I worked in several labs in Ft. Collins and Denver, and at a biotechnology company, Myogen.

As a graduate student from 2001 to 2007, I worked with Dr. John Solaro, in which I identified several protein kinase C (PKC) isoforms that associate with cardiac troponin proteins. I went on to characterize PKC zeta as a novel modulator of sarcomeric proteins in cardiac myocytes. More importantly, I learned how to become a good scientist not only in Dr. Solaro's laboratory, but from every one in the department.

As of February 2008, I became a post-doctoral fellow in the laboratory of Dr. Timothy O'Connell at Sanford Research/University of South Dakota. The laboratory has identified alpha1-adrenergic receptors in the heart as crucial to physiologic hypertrophy and cardiac myocyte survival under pathologic conditions. Currently, I am studying how alpha1-adrenergic receptors exert their cardio-protective effects under patho-physiologic hypertrophy, and how they contribute to cardiac contractility.

I was honored to receive the Lambrecht Award in 2005. Many good, promising physiology students have received the award, and have moved on to great careers in research. I was humbled to be considered in such great company by the faculty. Like those before me, I hope to be well on my way to a great scientific career in cardiovascular physiology.

2006 – AURORA SHEHU, PH.D.



Among all the awards that I have received during my career in science, the “Mark Lambrecht Award” is the one that I treasure the most. I first heard about Mark and the award from a fellow student in my lab, Mike Risk, who was a past recipient. Next, I saw the pictures that Mark had taken, stunning and breathtaking, and I realized the meaning of “pictures are worth a thousand words”. As I learned more about him and his life, I came to admire Mark for the kind of person he was and I witnessed how loved and respected he was by the whole department. Therefore, it was a great honor receiving this award and although I know that I cannot measure up to him, I try my best to keep up his spirit (image) every day of my life.

Since then, I successfully finished my doctorate studies in the Summer of 2008 in the laboratory of Dr. Geula Gibori. The title of my thesis was “Regulation of HSD17B7 in tumorigenesis and fetal survival”. I found this novel enzyme (HSD17B7), to be expressed in the brain and to be essential in fetal brain development. We are currently testing whether this enzyme is mutated/deleted in human fetal tissue and whether it can be used as a diagnostic tool for anencephaly. I have presented this work in many different conferences, among which, Gordon Conference, Annual Meeting of the Endocrine Society and Annual meeting of the Society for Study of Reproduction. From this work, I have published papers in *Molecular Endocrinology* and *Endocrinology* journal. I am currently a postdoctoral fellow in the department of Physiology.

2007 – JAMIE LE, PH.D. CANDIDATE

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Lambrecht,

I first entered the Physiology and Biophysics Ph.D. program in the fall of 2004 and from the very beginning heard the heartwarming stories about Mark. From all that I have heard about him, I can tell that he was a genuine sweetheart. In fact, Linda, who has been a staff in the department for many years, told me that Mark was the type of person who would always smile no matter what. I also discovered that he was quite the technological guru back in the day, implementing email in the department. I often look at the photographs in the student computer room that were taken by Mark. He and I both share a fondness for photography and it makes me smile each time I look at the photos. My personal favorite is the one taken of the phone booth. I am honored to have received such a prestigious award in the department and I am grateful for your continued support of graduate education throughout the years.



Currently in my fifth year of the program, I have chosen to study prolactin action in the ovary. Prolactin is a hormone that is essential in female fertility. It is essential for implantation of the embryo and the maintenance of pregnancy. Little is known about how this hormone functions. Prolactin is known to act through two receptors, a long and short form, but no one understands how these receptors function independently from one another and whether or not both receptors are required for normal prolactin function. Our lab has previously shown that prolactin acting through only the short form of the receptor in mice leads to premature ovarian failure and infertility. This phenotype is similar to that of women suffering from galactosemia, a disease with no known etiology. To better define the signaling mechanisms of prolactin, I have generated mutant strains of mice that express only the long form of the prolactin receptor. To my surprise, mice expressing only the long form are also infertile. These mice, however, do not have premature ovarian failure like the mice expressing only the short form. Clearly, both receptors are necessary for normal function and my work is now focused on determining the role of the long form of the prolactin receptor in the ovary. As a spin off on this project, I have noticed that male mice expressing the long form have an increased amount of fat. It seems that prolactin may be acting in the males to increase fat production and this is another avenue of investigation I am currently pursuing. I hope to defend my thesis by spring of 2010 and plan on choosing a post doctoral position in California, where all of my family resides.

This award has alleviated some of my expenses to travel to meetings so that I can present my research and obtain feedback from the best scientists in my field. By attending meetings, these opportunities allow me to network with both prominent scientists and other young trainees like myself in my field. In addition, I have used the award money to pay for memberships to The Society for the Study of Reproduction and to The Endocrine Society. Receiving this award has meant so much to me since it is one of the highest honors in our department.

2007 – SARAH SCRUGGS, PH.D. CANDIDATE

Dear Lambrecht Family,

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you so very much for setting up the Mark Lambrecht Fund with the Department of Physiology and Biophysics. I am a senior student in this department in the laboratory of Dr. Solaro. I received a Mark Lambrecht travel award that paid my way to attend a specialized proteomics and bioinformatics conference at the Institute for Systems Biology in Seattle, Washington during the week of November 4-9, 2007. This was not a regular national meeting that most graduate students, post-docs and faculty in our department attend, but rather this was a special technical series of seminars which focused on statistical validation and design of informatics programs used in proteomic research—not exactly everyone’s cup of tea, but mine indeed ☺. I want you to know that I would not have been able to attend had it not been for this fund that you have graciously established in our department. And for this, I sincerely thank you. This was truly a great gift to me and to my career as it has helped prepare me for a competitive career in proteomic research.



I will be graduating in November of 2008 and my future plans are to begin a post-doctoral fellowship with Dr. Peipei Ping, Ph.D., in the Department of Physiology, David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California Los Angeles. My project will involve using cutting-edge techniques, including mass spectrometry, to understand the cardiovascular proteome in both normal and diseased states. My long-term goal is to remain in academic science and to achieve tenure in a research institution where I can start my own laboratory and continue pursuing my passion for cardiovascular research. It was experiences such as the bioinformatics seminar in Seattle that sparked my interest and enthusiasm to pursue these goals, and so I thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to participate.

I have often thought that I wish I could have had your son Mark as a classmate. The way Dr. Solaro speaks of him so...I can see him as being a spark of enthusiasm in the department, ready to help anyone at any time. His picture in our computer laboratory speaks for itself. The memories of his presence are with us here in Physiology forever.

I hope you have a wonderful holiday season.

My sincere gratitude,

Sarah B. Scruggs

2008 - YALDA AFSHAR, M.D., PH.D. CANDIDATE

Dearest Lambrecht Family,

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I was a fortunate recipient of your generous travel award in Spring 2008 that enabled me to attend a 6-week intensive course entitled Frontiers in Reproduction (FIR) at the Marine Biological Laboratories in Woods Hole, Massachusetts.



Currently, I am a MD/PhD student completing my PhD with Dr. Fazleabas. We are investigating the molecular mechanisms involved in embryonic implantation. These studies are part of a larger goal of investigating the biological basis involved in fertility and gynecological disorders. Following graduation, I intend to complete a residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology and aspire for an academic career as a clinician-scientist. Specifically, I am interested in a clinical/teaching career investigating social determinants of disease and global family-planning issues.

I completed my undergraduate degrees in Molecular Cell Biology, Anthropology, and Evolutionary Biology from UC Berkeley and following graduation worked on a field-site in southern Peru and subsequently went on as a Pre-Doctoral training fellow at the NIH before moving to Chicago. When not in lab, I spend my time volunteering at the Student Run Free Clinic, at Cook County family-planning clinics, traveling extensively, biking, and as a U.S. delegate to the International Federation of Medical Students association, working in conjunction with the WHO to make healthcare a right.

Thank you again for the opportunity to attend the FIR course this summer. I have already made multiple collaboration with some of the top researchers in the field, friends/colleagues that I remain in close contact with, and been exposed to a variety of lectures and laboratory techniques that I will continue to utilize in my future career in women's health. Merci Beaucoup for your support!

In Peace and Health,

Yalda Afshar

2008 – AMIKA SINGLA, PH.D. CANDIDATE



My first research experience happened when I enrolled at Bachelor's and Master's degree program in Biochemistry (Honors) at Panjab University, Chandigarh, India. I have always been among the elite students of my batch that has filled in me a sense of confidence in this subject. The first path breaking in the field of research was when I developed my Master's degree research thesis in the field of Gastrointestinal Physiology. I continued further research by obtaining a very competitive research fellowship to pursue Ph.D. program in Physiology and Biophysics at University of Illinois at Chicago. My thesis project in the laboratory of Dr Pradeep Dudeja is entitled "Mechanisms Underlying Modulation of Apical Cl^-/OH^- Exchange Activity by Lysophosphatidic Acid (LPA) in Intestinal Epithelial Cells". These studies are of great significance in understanding the mechanisms regulating intestinal NaCl absorption and may aid in the development of novel therapeutic agents for the treatment of diarrheal disorders. One of the best moments in my life was when I was chosen for Lambrecht award, which greatly helped me in learning the Ussing chamber technique from Dr. Lane Clarke (University of Missouri). Getting this award broadened my knowledge in electrophysiological techniques that are crucial for studying the ion transport mechanisms across the epithelium. My future goals are to obtain a post-doctoral fellowship in GI physiology to further enhance my academic and scientific skills and develop an independent scientific career.

2008 – KRISTINE ANSENBERGER, PH.D. CANDIDATE



Dear Mr. and Mrs. Lambrecht,

As the newest recipient of the Mark R. Lambrecht award, I would just like to again express my thanks for this honor. As I walked around last night, I was in a sort of state of shock, so I felt that I really wasn't able to express my profound gratitude to you. The thought of receiving this award and being in the same group of phenomenal students who have received it in the past is a little overwhelming. I only hope that I will become a scientist worthy of this award.

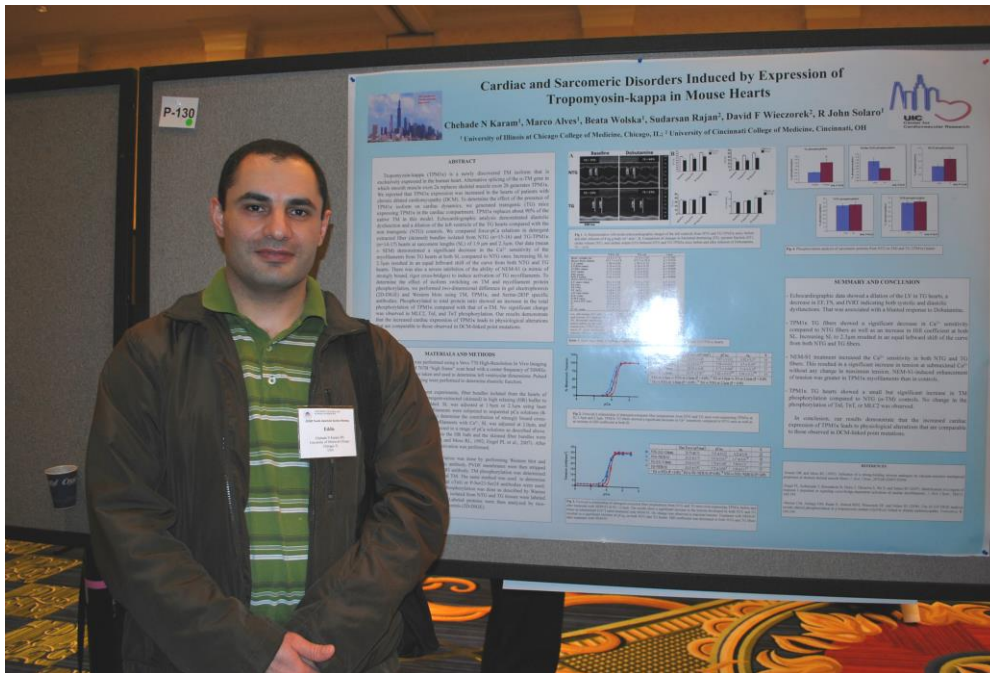
One of the nicest comments I received last night was from Dr. Kennedy who said that he was really reminded of Mark when he thought of me. Hearing all of the wonderful things that were said about your son makes me hope that I am like him. He seemed to be a wonderful person that truly cared for his family and friends, and just seemed to be an all around great guy. I hope that when people look back upon me in twenty years, they will have the same great feelings and memories of me.

Thank you again for bestowing upon me this great honor. I hope that in the future we will meet again and that I will be able to tell you about all of the wonderful things I am doing in science. Thank you so much for deeming me worthy of representing your son. I am truly honored that you see in me the same passion and dedication your son possessed. I make my commitment to continue to exemplify these characteristics as I move forward with my work in science.

Thank you,

Kristine Ansenberger
11/20/08

2009 – CHEHADE KARAM, PH.D. CANDIDATE



I was awarded the Mark R. Lambrecht Award for Scholarship and Commitment in December of 2009. It is a great honor to have received this prestigious award and to be counted among the many students who received it in the previous years. This award will always be treasured and hold a special place in my heart.

I am a Ph.D student working in the laboratory of Dr. John Solaro. My thesis project was about studying the function of a novel tropomyosin isoform, tropomyosin-kappa, in modulating the heart function. I successfully defended my Ph.D thesis on October 18, 2010 and will be moving to Rush University at the beginning of 2011. At Rush I will be studying Calcium signaling in cardiac and skeletal muscle in the laboratory of Dr. Jingsong Zhou.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Lambrecht family for their generosity and their continuous support of the UIC Physiology graduate students.

2010 – DOMENICO TAGLIERI, PH.D. CANDIDATE

Dearest Lambrecht Family,
I wish to express all my deepest gratitude for honoring me with the Mark Lambrecht Award 2010. It is a real privilege to receive an award that bears Mark's name on it. Mark's name represents to all of us honesty and loyalty, talent and enthusiasm, positivity and generosity. It is with a very humble spirit that I accept this award with the aim to continue keeping high Mark's virtues and values, in which he strongly believed. I am sure that this award will provide great impetus to my career and I will always consider the Mark Lambrecht Award as the highest mark of distinction I have ever received in my life.



After pursuing a Degree in Medicine and Surgery (MD) and a residency in Anesthesiology and Intensive Care Medicine in Italy, I decided to move to the USA as I have always been fascinated by research. Ever since I was a medical student, I have developed a relentless desire to link my clinical interests to basic science and I have decided to pursue an academic career as a physician scientist. After a brief experience as a research fellow in cardiac resuscitation science, I met Dr. R. John Solaro, PhD, and I decided to join his laboratory as a PhD student. Here, I have elucidated, for the first time, the interrelationship between p21-activated kinase (PAK-1) and the Mitogen-Activated Protein Kinase Erk1/2, illustrating their role in the development of cardiac hypertrophy. I am confident that such studies will fully equip me to achieve my professional goals and will lead me to my passion of helping to improve society, thus acting as an effective liaison between scientists and the public.

Besides devoting time to studying and research, I participate in a variety of social activities. Serving as the Treasurer of the Physiology and Biophysics Graduate Student Association (PBGSA), I have been able to secure conspicuous extramural funding to invite prestigious scientists to the Department of Physiology and Biophysics, thus giving birth to the "PBGSA Science Seminars" with the aim to help promote education and scientific collaboration.

As a student of this department, I am truly grateful to you for your commitment to student research and support. I wish to thank you for giving me the honor to meet you in person and for having the chance to share with you memories of Mark during the Awards Night. I will always treasure in my heart those moments together.

Yours sincerely,
Domenico M. Taglieri, MD

2011 – JILLIAN SIMON, PH.D. CANDIDATE

Dear Lambrecht Family,

Words cannot fully express how grateful I am to be amongst the many outstanding individuals who have been chosen as recipients of the Mark R. Lambrecht Award. Furthermore, to say I am honored to receive this award that commemorates all the wonderful qualities Mark possessed is an understatement. From the bottom of my heart, I would like to thank the Lambrecht's for their continual support of our department and the sciences.

I completed my undergraduate studies at Alma College, a small liberal arts school in Michigan. While there I was introduced to basic science research by Dr. Karen Ball, and a past recipient of the Mark R. Lambrecht Award (1992). I must say, she still exemplifies all the qualities I am certain made her a much-deserving recipient of this award and it was her enthusiasm for scientific research that made me decide to continue on to a PhD program. Currently, I am a PhD student in Dr. Beata Wolska's lab where my primary research project examines the molecular mechanisms that alter cardiac contractility associated with lipid accumulation, namely increases in ceramide. I will be finishing my thesis research this fall and plan to continue on to a post-doctoral position in the beginning of next year. The department has also provided me with several opportunities to teach physiology, something I am very passionate about and foresee continuing in the future. When I'm not in the lab I enjoy spending time with my husband and two kids.



Maya Angelou says it far better than I ever could –

“When we cast our bread upon the waters, we can presume that someone downstream whose face we will never know will benefit from our action, as we who are downstream from another will profit from that grantor's gift.”

Through your generosity many individuals have been able to continue doing outstanding things and show others the passion they possess for knowledge and science. My hope is to live true to this idea and to leave a lasting impression on the world, something Mark clearly did.

With warmest regards,

Jillian Simon

2012 – TANGANYIKA WILDER, PH.D. CANDIDATE

Dearest Lambrecht Family:

Greetings and I hope this letter finds you all in excellent spirits. I was the blessed recipient of the Mark Lambrecht Award for Scholarship and Commitment in 2012. I was pleased to hear that Mark and I were so much alike. One comment regarding his ability to multi-task and lend his varying talents to many different aspects and people of the department to make an immediate impact was one that has permeated my thoughts since I have received this award. It is very comforting to know that my innate characteristics have the potential to leave behind a wonderful legacy that has the potential to benefit others the way Mark's life has done for so many of us here in the Physiology and Biophysics Department. I truly wished that I had the opportunity to meet and interact with him, as all I hear are great and wonderful accolades. I am utterly grateful to have received this most esteemed award. Receiving it has made me want excel to even higher standards than I already set for my life. So, I want to say thank you for your continued support for me as well as those who are following in my footsteps.



Currently, I am working in Dr. John Solaro's lab in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the mechanisms associated with genetic heart disease as it relates to the basic units of the heart, the sarcomere. Our work focuses on how antioxidants, like N-Acetylcysteine (NAC), can reverse and prevent the development of hypertrophy of the genetically modified heart. Interestingly, we are finding that oral administration of anti-oxidants, specifically NAC, can prevent the growth and relaxation dysfunction in subjects that are born with a mutation that depresses heart function. As you can imagine, it is most exciting to know that I am involved in research aimed at helping to alleviate this deadly disease. As this work is nearing completion, I anticipate defending and graduating in Spring 2014. My long-term goal will be aimed at impacting as many students as I can reach, as my gift lies in science education.

I am grateful to have been a recipient of this award in honor of your son. It was truly a blessing to me as it helped me to attend conferences as well as to offset educational costs (including living expenses) for my family of six (my spouse and four children). Hence, I sincerely thank you for your support and the tremendous honor. In solidarity with your family, I aim to continue to honor Mark's life with my actions in the future. Thank you so much for the opportunity!

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tanganyika Wilder". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Tanganyika (Tangy) Wilder

2012 – ESTHER L. CALDERON-GIERSZAL, PH.D. CANDIDATE

Dear Lambrecht Family,

I would like to express my most sincere gratitude for being honored with the Mark R. Lambrecht Award for Research. Your additional support allowed me to participate in the 2012 Frontiers in Reproduction (FIR) course, which is held each summer at the Marine Biological Laboratory, a world-famous training ground for experimental



biologists, in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. FIR is an intensive six week laboratory and lecture course for which only 20 scientists-in-training worldwide are chosen. Attending the FIR course has helped me to improve my knowledge and experimental skills in order to pursue a career in the Reproductive Sciences, as I am planning to do as a post-doctoral fellow. Without this distinguished award I would not have been able to benefit from the lectures, discussions, informal seminars, laboratory exercises, demonstrations and one on one tutorials in each section of the course, that otherwise I would not have access to in the classroom or laboratory.

My thesis work at Dr. Gail Prins' laboratory is to establish an *in vivo* and a novel *in vitro* human prostate model utilizing human embryonic stem cells to test whether the human tissue is susceptible to developmental estrogen reprogramming. In addition, I am studying the effects of ligand-dependent and ligand independent estrogen receptor actions in the murine prostate utilizing *in vivo* models.

Your immense generosity allows students like me to participate in hands-on courses like FIR that in my case helped me to gain priceless scientific tools, intellectual knowledge, the opportunity to interact and network with leading scientists in the reproduction field and with like-minded colleagues. Again thank you for continuing to support our department and the young generation of scientists that will become part of the scientific force of the US.

Truly yours,

Esther L. Calderon-Gierszal, MS

2012 – LEONID SEREBRYANNYY, PH.D. CANDIDATE

Dear Lambrecht Family,

I would like to extend my whole-hearted and sincerest gratitude for the opportunities you have given me - and continue to give to the students - through your support for this Department.

In the winter of 2012, I was given the chance to travel to Sweden and work with scientists at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. This institute is at the forefront of microscopy technology. They are able to see details of the cell in a level of resolution that is only now coming of age. This was a wonderful opportunity to train in these cutting edge techniques with the scientists that created them. It would also allow me to use this microscopy method to advance my thesis research and use these techniques to look inside the nucleus of the cell

- home of DNA and genetic regulation. However, the current funding situation for science is rough and our lab was no exception, leaving little money for such a trip. Due to your family's generous support and donations, I was able to secure enough funds for my month long excursion to Sweden.

There I became one of the first people to see the nucleus of the cell in such a high resolution and the first to quantify my system of study in such a level of spatial detail. This experience not only greatly furthered my own thesis research, but exposed me to the international community of scientists and built invaluable collaborations across the world.

I can honestly say this has been one of the most fascinating and rewarding experiences of my life. I can only offer my deepest gratitude for the support you have given me - without it this study would not have happened. I believe it is opportunities such as these that give young scientists the skills and experiences necessary to advance science and medicine into the future. I am optimistic that my experience has enabled me to do just that, and I am excited to publish this work in the coming year.



Sincerely and with heartfelt gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Serebryanny'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with long, sweeping lines.

Leo Serebryanny

2013 – RYAN LAHEY, M.D., PH.D. CANDIDATE

To the Lambrecht Family,

It was my great honor to receive the 2013 Mark R. Lambrecht Award for Scholarship and Commitment. I would like to thank you for your past, present, and continued support of this important award that supports young up-and-coming scientists. I can think of no finer way for you to honor Mark than to invest in the future of scientific discovery, a cause he so passionately supported.

As an aspiring physician scientist, I am enrolled in the Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) at the University of Illinois at Chicago, earning dual MD-PhD degrees over the span of eight years. I completed my doctoral thesis in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics, investigating pathologic metabolic mechanisms in heart failure under the guidance of Dr. E. Douglas Lewandowski. I am currently interviewing for a residency position in the specialty of Internal Medicine and plan to eventually complete a fellowship in Cardiovascular Disease and pursue a career in academic medicine.

I was fortunate enough to be selected by the department faculty to receive the award as I was finishing the PhD phase of my training. Your support was instrumental in allowing me to finish my research and cover many expenses associated with residency interviews and the completion of medical school. Perhaps more importantly, the award continues to serve as a reminder to me that we are called to share our talents and resources with one another.

Thank you again for all your support and generosity to the graduate students of our department.

Best regards,

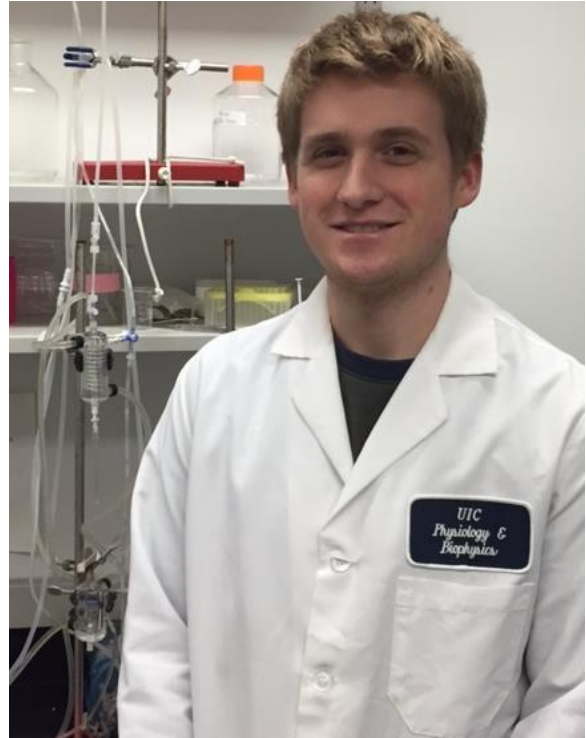
Ryan Lahey
MD/PhD Candidate
Class of 2016



2014 – DAVID RYBA, PH.D. CANDIDATE

Dear Lambrecht Family,

Over the summer of 2014 I was given the opportunity to travel to Toronto to VisualSonics, a company that makes high-resolution ultrasound machines specifically for use in pre-clinical research, to advance my skills in echocardiography (“echo”). Echo allows researchers to non-invasively monitor the cardiac function of the animal that they are studying over time, in our case mice. It is nearly identical to the technique that is used in humans. However, mice can be extremely challenging to perform echo on as their hearts beat upwards of 500 beats per minute and their small size. Therefore, it is imperative that the echocardiographer is able to acquire consistent, high-quality images for reproducibility and publication.



During my trip to Toronto, I was trained by experts in small-animal echocardiography and dramatically improved my skills. As our department had recently acquired a brand-new ultrasound machine, this experience also allowed me to learn how to correctly use our machine and fully take advantage of its capabilities.

This trip would not have been possible without the support given to our department, in my case through the Lambrecht Travel Award. I am extremely grateful for this opportunity, as it not only allows me to learn a valuable skill and advance my thesis work but also allows me to share this knowledge with other people in our lab and department. In this way, it has not only helped me but other scientists in training.

My future work will almost certainly include these skills as I work towards my goal of becoming an independent investigator.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to your family for the continued support of our Department.

Sincerely,



David Ryba

2014 – SARAH BAUMGARTEN, M.D., PH.D. CANDIDATE

Dear Lambrecht Family,

I am honored and delighted to have been the 2014 recipient of the Mark L. Lambrecht Award in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics at UIC. Although I did not have the opportunity to know Mark personally, I would like to assure you that he continues to have a strong presence in the department. Stories of his fun, kind, and generous spirit continue to be shared between faculty and students. The annual Mark L. Lambrecht award is highly coveted in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics, and I was proud to be recognized as a student deserving of the award in his memory.

I entered into the MD/PhD program at UIC in the summer of 2009, and after 2 years of medical school I joined the department of Physiology and Biophysics in 2011 to complete the PhD portion of my degree. I worked with Dr. Carlos Stocco to conduct my thesis research in the field of reproductive endocrinology. I was able to collaborate with the doctors and embryologists at the University of Illinois Medical Center Fertility Clinic to develop a novel model to study human ovarian follicular development and to elucidate molecular mechanisms driving this process. This thesis work granted me many opportunities to travel and present my work at conferences and was recognized with numerous awards at both UIC and nationally. I successfully defended my thesis in June of 2015 and returned to medical school thereafter. I will graduate with my MD/PhD degrees in May of 2017, and I plan to pursue a career as a physician scientist in the field of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility.

With sincere thanks,

Sarah Baumgarten



2015 – JADA DOMINGUE, PH.D. CANDIDATE

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Lambrecht,

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your son and the impact he left on us in this department, and your ongoing commitment to our students through the Lambrecht awards as well as our computer room in his memory. It was with great pleasure and honor to be named the 2015 recipient of the Mark. R. Lambrecht Award for scholarship and commitment and to meet you and your wonderful family. I am still in awe that I was chosen to be a part of your son's legacy and I promise to do my best to live up to his and your family's name. Just as I was rather speechless at the awards night, I am finding it difficult to express in words the amount of gratitude that I have for your family and the continued support you provide to our department. I do have to thank you at least a second time as I was lucky enough to also receive financial support through the Lambrecht Research Award which helped fund my trip to work with Dr. Hugo de Jonge at Erasmus MC in Rotterdam, Netherlands. I learned to isolate and grow organoids



from mouse and human intestinal tissues, and measured swelling of this organoids as an indication of fluid secretion, which is applicable to my thesis work. This technique is revolutionizing the field of physiology and will play an important role in personalized medicine in the future. Without your help the trip may not have been possible, and because of it I have acquired new and valuable skills to be used in my career after UIC.

When I look at the past recipients, it is amazing to see the impact that you have left on their lives, and now mine as well. Recipients of this award are now leading successful careers as educators, partly due to them continuing the legacy of your family. I am in my final year as a Ph.D. student in Dr. Mrinalini (Meena) Rao's lab and she has always spoken so highly of your family. Under her mentorship I am currently elucidating the underlying signaling mechanisms that contribute to bile acid-induced diarrhea, a symptom that many people with intestinal disorders, such as irritable bowel syndrome, suffer from. I truly believe that mentorship is the key to success as a graduate student, and Dr. Rao has worked hard to instill in me the characteristics that your son possessed.

After I complete my PhD I plan to do a postdoctoral fellowship with an emphasis in teaching. I am passionate about educating future generations of scientists and about outreach programs that help students from underrepresented backgrounds pursue higher education. I am a product of these types of programs, and without them I would not be where I am today. In the future I plan to be a professor at a small liberal arts college where I feel I can impact students on a closer level than at a larger research focused institution. I aim to continue to be involved in outreach programs, and if there is a need for such programs at my future work place then I would like to start them as I know how important it is for all students to know they have opportunities beyond what they see for themselves.

Your generosity transcends through the years with the awards in your son's honor. Like all of the previous recipients I will be forever grateful for the opportunities that your contributions provide. I hope that one day I am able to support the lives of students and make long-lasting impressions as your family continues to do.

With warmest regards,
Jada Domingue

2016 – DAVID RYBA, PH.D. CANDIDATE

Dear Lambrecht Family,

I am honored to receive the 2016 Mark L. Lambrecht Award for Scholarship and Commitment. This award is highly revered in the department and I know that great consideration is given by the faculty to potential awardees.

I joined the department as an undergraduate student in at the beginning of the winter semester in 2012. As time went on, I realized that I wanted to pursue my PhD in Physiology and was admitted to the PhD program and began my studies in Fall 2013. I was fortunate enough to be accepted the laboratories of my two mentors, Dr. R. John Solaro and Dr. Beata M. Wolska. In the Solaro and Wolska laboratories we study heart disease. Specifically, we study the contribution of the sub-cellular structure responsible for contraction, the sarcomere, to the failing heart. I have been afforded many opportunities for collaboration in the department, which have enriched my education. Additionally, my advisors have encouraged and supported me in my applications and successful awards in national fellowships in competitions.

Currently, I am beginning to interview for post-doctoral positions across the country. My time spent here at UIC has been extremely rewarding and shaped my future. I know that your involvement and commitment to our department over the years has directly contributed to my positive experience here and I will carry that with me as I take my next steps. Thank you for your support of our department in Mark's honor.

Sincerely,
David Ryba



2017 – BERTHA JANE VANDEGRIFT, PH.D. CANDIDATE

Dear Lambrecht Family,

I want to give my sincere appreciation for generously recognizing me with the 2017 Mark L. Lambrecht Award for Scholarship and Commitment. It was a pleasure to meet your wonderful family and to take part in Mark's legacy.

I am currently studying the reward circuitry in female brains. My goal is to contribute to our understanding of how gonadal circulating hormones affect the female brain in health and disease. My mentors for the project are Dr. Amy Lasek of the Department of Psychiatry as well as Dr. Mark Brodie of the Department of Physiology and Biophysics. I have found that estradiol, the main circulating form of estrogen in adult females, enhances the response of the ventral tegmental area (VTA) to ethanol and dopamine. Because the VTA is a key brain region involved in addiction and dopaminergic systems are implicated in many psychiatric illnesses, I hope to expand our understanding of female physiology in order to improve therapies and treatments for women. I have had the opportunity to present my findings at various scientific conferences, including the Research Society on Alcoholism Meeting, Chicago Society for Neuroscience, and others. Thanks to support such as yours, I will continue to explore the mechanisms of my findings.

I am very grateful for this honor. Thank you so much for your support.

Sincerely Yours,
Bertha Jane Vandegrift



2018 – MAXIMILIAN MCCANN, PH.D. CANDIDATE

To the Lambrecht Family,

I want to offer my gratitude for your continued support of the department and the honor of receiving this award. My mentor is relatively new to UIC, so I have missed out on some of the stories about Mark, but the fact that we are still celebrating his life and memory speaks to what a special person your son was. I am highly honored to receive this award and join the select group of students that this honor has been bestowed upon.

I started my graduate studies and joined the department in 2014 and was fortunate to join the lab of Dr. Chong Wee Liew. We study various aspects of adipose biology and how they can be manipulated to treat the metabolic complications resulting from obesity. My thesis work focuses on the role that CREB3L3 plays in adipose biology. CREB3L3 is a protein that was previously found to be an important metabolic regulator in the liver, but we discovered that it is present in the adipose tissue. Additionally, we have found that the amount is decreased in the healthier subcutaneous fat during obesity, while the levels remain constant within the disease-associated visceral fat. We hypothesized that the removal of this protein from adipose tissue during obesity could have a metabolically protective effect, which we have seen in our mouse model. The mice that lack CREB3L3 in their fat tissue become heavier than the control mice when fed a high-fat diet, but do not exhibit the expected insulin resistance, dyslipidemia, or fat accumulation within their livers. I am currently working on identifying the molecular basis responsible for this intriguing mouse model. Thanks to support from you and others, I have been able to give talks about my research at the American Diabetes Association and the Central Society for Clinical & Translational Research meetings, which have proven to be invaluable experiences for my development as both a scientist and communicator.

Thank you again for your continued support of the department. I hope I can speak on behalf of the other honorees and say that we greatly appreciate all that you have done for the department and the enrichment opportunities that your support has allowed for us.

Sincerely,
Maximilian McCann

