



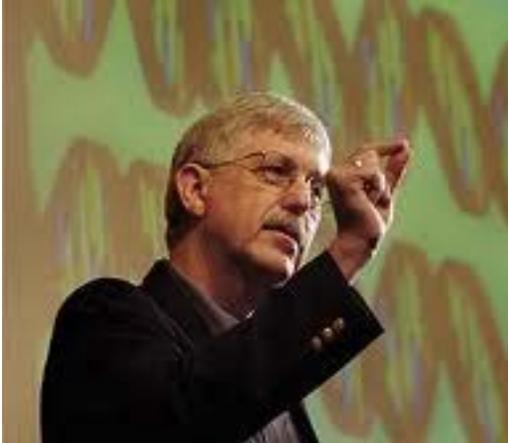
NEWS

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American Society of Human Genetics Honors Dr. Francis Collins with McKusick Leadership Award

BETHESDA, MD – July 10, 2012 – The [American Society of Human Genetics \(ASHG\)](http://www.ashg.org) has named Francis Collins, M.D., Ph.D., Director of the National Institutes of Health, as the recipient of the 2012 Victor A. McKusick Leadership Award. Dr. Collins, the sixth recipient of the award, will be honored at the ASHG 62nd annual meeting on Saturday, Nov. 10, at the Moscone Convention Center in San Francisco.



Francis Collins, MD, PhD

This award, named in honor of the late [Dr. Victor A. McKusick](#), recognizes individuals whose professional achievements have fostered and enriched the development of human genetics. “Recipients exemplify the enduring leadership and vision required to ensure that the field of human genetics will flourish and successfully assimilate into the broader context of science, medicine, and health, while also making major contributions to awareness or understanding of human genetics by policy makers or by the general public,” said Joann Boughman, Ph.D., Executive Vice President of ASHG.

Dr. Collins was selected for the 2012 award because of his extensive achievements in genetics research, his efforts to advance health science and technology through policy and education, and his stellar leadership of the genetics community in mapping the human genome. “The revolution that

was dreamed of at the start of the Human Genome project is currently being realized,” Boughman said. “Today’s medical geneticists, genetic counselors, and other health professionals are increasingly able to identify genes associated with both single-gene and complex diseases.”

These medical and scientific advances would not have been possible without Dr. Collin’s leadership and dedication to studying the molecular genetics of diseases for the benefit of health and medicine, she added.

Prior to his current position, Dr. Collins was the Director of the National Human Genome Research Institute and steered the NIH-based Human Genome Project to completion. Before joining NIH, Dr. Collins had already contributed to human genetics by helping to identify the gene for cystic fibrosis in 1989, the gene for neurofibromatosis in 1990, and the gene for Huntington’s disease in 1993.

His current laboratory, located at NIH, focuses on the function of genes involved in breast cancer, diabetes, Hutchinson-Gilford progeria syndrome, and many other conditions. In 2008, Dr. Collins stepped down from the NHGRI, and less than a year later, he was chosen by President Obama to serve as the Director of the National Institutes of Health.

Dr. Collins has received many awards for his achievements including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in November 2007 and the National Medal of Science in 2009. In addition, he was elected to the Institute of Medicine and the National Academy of Sciences.

His education and outreach efforts include the creation of clinical partnerships with four historically African-American colleges and universities to develop clinical research degrees and conduct treatment trials involving minority patients.

He also established the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences to enhance the process of translating scientific discoveries into new drugs, diagnostics, and medical devices.

“Dr. Collins is certainly deserving of this award, which ASHG considers its highest honor for leader-scientists,” said Dr. Boughman. “He will forever be remembered for being on the forefront of what will be considered the most important biological advance of the century,”

About ASHG

Founded in 1948, the American Society of Human Genetics is the primary professional membership organization for nearly 8,000 human genetics specialists worldwide. The [ASHG Annual Meeting](#) is the world's largest gathering of human genetics professionals and a forum for renowned experts in the field. This year, ASHG will host the 62th Annual Meeting in San Francisco, CA, on Nov. 6-10, 2012.

For additional information, please contact our office at press@ashg.org

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