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THE NEW YORK STEM CELL FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES \$9 MILLION TO SIX NEW NYSCF – ROBERTSON INVESTIGATORS

NEW YORK, NY (October 14, 2014) – The New York Stem Cell Foundation (NYSCF) today named six of the most promising scientists as its 2014 NYSCF – Robertson Investigators.

Each Investigator will receive a \$1.5 million award, which will be disbursed over the next five years, which will enable them to expand their laboratories and train other scientists. Three of the scientists were named **NYSCF – Robertson Stem Cell Investigators**, a program in its fifth year, and three were named **NYSCF – Robertson Neuroscience Investigators**, a program in its fourth year.

“These young Investigators are truly exceptional. They join the large NYSCF Innovator community, which represents the best stem cell scientists in the world. The caliber of applicants has never been higher and we are thrilled to support the careers and development of these path-breaking scientists,” said Susan L. Solomon, Chief Executive Officer of NYSCF.

The latest Investigators were announced **at NYSCF’s Ninth Annual Gala and Science Fair**, held at Jazz at Lincoln Center in Manhattan.

Designed to support scientists engaged in novel neuroscience and cutting-edge translational stem cell research, the two Investigator Programs were created to aid talented researchers as they make the transition from the post doctoral phase of their careers to the establishment of their own laboratories.

The Investigator awards build on the previous success of NYSCF’s Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, which is the largest program of postdoctoral support for stem cell researchers in the United States, and has provided funding for 47 postdoctoral researchers to date.

Marc Tessier-Lavigne, PhD, President of The Rockefeller University, chaired the NYSCF – Robertson Neuroscience Investigator Program’s selection committee.

“We again had an incredibly impressive group of applicants this year, but we are thrilled to be able to award this talented group of scientists,” said Dr. Tessier-Lavigne. “We are looking forward to the groundbreaking discoveries they will continue make in the field of neuroscience.”

Tessier-Lavigne was joined on the jury by Amita Sehgal, PhD, University of Pennsylvania; Catherine Dulac, PhD, Harvard University; and Anders Bjorklund, MD, PhD, the Lund University in Sweden.

The NYSCF – Robertson Stem Cell Investigator Program’s selection committee consisted of Lorenz Studer, MD, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center; Fiona Watt, DPhil, King’s College London in the United Kingdom; Irv Weissman, MD, Stanford University; Amy Wagers, PhD and 2013 NYSCF – Robertson Stem Cell Prize recipient from Harvard University; and Gordon Keller, PhD, McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine in Toronto, Canada.

“I’m thrilled we were able to select this extraordinary group of early career scientists to be awarded NYSCF – Robertson Investigator awards. This group has already made extremely important contributions to medical research and I am confident they will continue to make discoveries that will change our understanding of and ability to treat debilitating diseases,” said Dr. Wagers.

The new **NYSCF – Robertson Stem Cell Investigators** are:

- **Valentina Greco, PhD**, Associate Professor at Yale University where she is utilizing genetic, live imaging and genomic approaches to capture the emergence of cancer by live imaging in order to identify the fundamental mechanisms that regulate the birth, development and regression of tumors. These approaches hold great promise to transform current therapeutic strategies to cure and prevent cancer.
- **Jennifer E. Phillips-Cremins, PhD**, Assistant Professor at the University of Pennsylvania where she is running the 3-D Epigenomics and Systems Neurobiology laboratory focused on understanding how epigenetic modifications work together in the context of the 3-D nucleus to govern pluripotency and stem cell differentiation along the neuroectoderm lineage.
- **Feng Zhang, PhD**, Core Member of the Broad Institute of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard and the W. M. Keck Career Development Professor of Biomedical Engineering at MIT where he is developing and applying disruptive technologies including optogenetics and genome engineering (TALENs and CRISPR) to understand nervous system function and disease.

The new **NYSCF – Robertson Neuroscience Investigators** are:

- **Edward Chang, MD**, Neurosurgeon, Chief of Epilepsy and Pain Neurosurgery, and an Associate Professor in the Departments of Neurological Surgery and Physiology at the University of California, San Francisco, where his lab focuses on discovering the neural circuitry of human speech. He specializes in advanced clinical brain mapping methods, including awake speech mapping, to safely perform neurosurgical procedures in eloquent areas of the brain.
- **Lisa Giocomo, PhD**, Assistant Professor of Neurobiology at Stanford University School of Medicine, where her lab integrates electrophysiology, behavior, gene manipulations, optogenetics and computational modeling to study how single-cell biophysics and network dynamics interact to mediate spatial memory and navigation.
- **Kay M. Tye, PhD**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and part of the Picower Institute for Learning and Memory, where she focuses on understanding how the brain processes valence, or in other words, the difference between positive and negative stimuli.