

Introduction: Gaston Labat Award 2000—Gary R. Strichartz, Ph.D.

Gary Strichartz was born in Washington, DC, on October 28, 1943. He began his long and distinguished scientific career by graduating from Antioch College in Yellow Springs, OH, with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1965. He spent the next 5 years as a Pre-Doctoral Fellow in the Department of Biophysics and Physical Chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania, culminating in his Doctoral Thesis under Dr. Britton Chance, and his Ph.D. degree in Biophysics. After a brief stint as a Research Associate in the Department of Physiology at the University of New Mexico, Dr. Strichartz spent the next 2 years, 1970-1972, as a Post Doctoral Fellow at the University of Washington School of Medicine in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics, training in neurophysiology and membrane biophysics and conducting research in the laboratory of Dr. Bertil Hille on the properties of ionic channels and mechanisms of action of local anesthetics, a subject that captured his interest and occupied most of his time in his subsequent years in scientific research. Dr. Strichartz spent the following 3 years from 1972 through 1975 in the Department of Pharmacology at Yale working in the laboratory of Professor J. Murdoch Ritchie, experience which focused his research even further on the mechanisms underlying the action of local anesthetics on nerves and nerve conduction. In 1975 he was appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics at the Health Sciences Center at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, where he spent 6 years teaching medical students and pursuing his research activities. In 1981, Gary had the good fortune of being invited to conduct a seminar at a meeting hosted by Professor Benjamin G. Covino, who at that time was Professor of Anesthesiology at the new medical center at the University of Massachusetts, and when Ben Covino accepted the Chair at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, he had the good fortune to recruit Gary Strichartz to the Brigham, where together with Ben, Gary put together what is undoubtedly the finest research center having to do with local anesthetics and the mechanisms of local anesthetic action in the world. The Strichartz-Covino relationship was truly "hand-in-glove," and the combination of the cutting-edge research carried out by Gary Strichartz and his group in the laboratory and the enormous productivity in clinical research by Ben Covino and his group in the operating room established the Brigham and Women's Hospital as a "mecca" of local anesthetics and regional anesthesia, both nationally and internationally. Anyone who had the privilege of attending and/or participating in their annual course on local anesthetics and regional anesthesia marveled at the way Gary Strichartz, Ben Covino, and their colleagues elucidated the scientific foundations of regional anesthesia and the clinical practice based on them.

In his 20 years at the Brigham, Gary Strichartz was quickly promoted from Associate Professor to Professor of Anesthesiology and Pharmacology at the Harvard Medical School, while at the Brigham and Women's Hospital he rose from Senior Research Associate to Director of the Anesthesia Research Laboratories and Director of the Pain Research Center at that institution. There is certainly ample evidence of the productivity of Gary Strichartz and his colleagues: He has authored or coauthored more than 105 papers in peer-reviewed journals, 106 scientific abstracts, 34 chapters in textbooks, and 8 editorials and letters to the editor. Gary has guided the research of 11 predoctoral and 24 postdoctoral fellows; he has

served on the Editorial Board of 6 scientific journals, including *Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine* and *Anesthesiology*; he has been the organizer or a member of the organizing committee of more than 30 scientific meetings and congresses; and he has been awarded 18 major grants in support of his research. For obvious reasons, Gary has been a very sought after lecturer and has been invited to participate in more regional, national, and international meetings than most of us attend in a lifetime.

Most important to us as anesthesiologists is the fact that Gary Strichartz, more than any other researcher in our time, has provided us with an understanding of the mechanisms subserving nerve conduction, and even more important, the mechanisms by which that important neurophysiologic function can be blocked. He has provided us with a scientific basis for what we do every day in the operating room and, hence, indirectly, he has really provided an enormous service to the patients for whom we care every day. Gary has already received the Stuart C. Cullen Medal for contributions to anesthesia from the University of California San Francisco in 1993 and the prestigious Award for Excellence in Research from the American Society of Anesthesiologists in 1998. Today, at this first meeting of the American Society of Regional Anesthesia in the year 2000 and on the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Society, we honor Gary Strichartz by presenting to him the Gaston Labat Award, which reads, "An award presented annually by the American Society of Regional Anesthesia for outstanding contributions to the development, teaching, and practice of regional anesthesia in the tradition of Gaston Labat." Gary, we would not be where we are today in regional anesthesia if it were not for the dedicated work of people like yourself. Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to present Dr. Gary Strichartz.

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