

## **CITATION FOR AWARD OF AN HONORARY FELLOWSHIP TO PROFESSOR TERRY DAVIES**

Mr Chancellor

In the early 1970s, Newcastle University was renowned across the globe for ground-breaking research in the field of Endocrinology (or hormones, to the uninitiated). Here, the legendary Professor Reg Hall was dissecting out the mechanisms of thyroid gland disease at the Royal Victoria Infirmary. Reg was an exceptional mentor, and he had a knack for finding and nurturing the most exceptional clinical scientists. His protégés included Tony Weetman, current Dean of Medicine in Sheffield, and Alan McGregor, Professor of Medicine at King's College London. And in 1971, there was a new member of the team, Dr Terry Davies, an enthusiastic recent graduate of the Newcastle undergraduate medical programme, MBBS.

Working with Reg, Terry made several important discoveries at a very early stage in his career. From the outset, he focussed on understanding thyroid stimulating hormone, or TSH, which is produced by the pituitary at the base of the brain. TSH regulates the production of two thyroid hormones - T3 and T4 - names that would ultimately play a major role in both his work *and home* life, as you shall soon hear, Mr Chancellor.

As a young researcher, Terry was instrumental in developing a key model of thyroid disease which led to many important discoveries, and ultimately influenced the treatment of patients. He established his name through regular publications in the most prestigious medical and scientific journals, including the Lancet, the New England Journal of Medicine and Nature, and he has doggedly pursued this important and fascinating area of science to the present day.

After completing his MD in 1978 in Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism, he secured a UK Medical Research Council travelling fellowship, leading him to the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. There, he attracted the attention of senior faculty at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York. He was hired, and established a world-leading research group that has gone from strength to strength.

Now the Florence and Theodore Baumritter Professor of Medicine, he is an attending physician at Mount Sinai Hospital, where he is Director of the Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism. His research team is based close by at the James J. Peters Veterans Administration Medical Centre. He has received countless awards and honours for his work, including the Irma T. Hirschl Career Scientist Award, and the Mount Sinai Distinguished

Research Award, and is an elected member of the prestigious American Association of Physicians.

Remarkably, he has contributed over 400 research papers, chapters and books to the medical literature, and continues to publish at the highest level. His most recent paper in the Journal of Clinical Investigation appeared on line this very month, further dissecting out disease mechanisms complicating TSH dysregulation.

His reputation led him to his 8-year appointment as Editor-in-Chief of the American Thyroid Association's journal, "Thyroid", where he became renowned for his carefully constructed editorials. Mr Chancellor, let me give you an example. In 2007 the Endocrine Society published guidelines on the thyroid and pregnancy. The guidelines committee struck a middle ground on the issue of universal screening for thyroid disease during pregnancy, recommending screening only in women who are at high risk for thyroid disease. In Terry's editorial he questioned the conclusion of the guidelines committee, stating, "You cannot sit on the fence forever. It is very uncomfortable for the backside".

Undeterred by his amusing and sometimes pointed editorials, the Association then awarded him the John B Stanbury Medal, before he was elected President. I

wonder whether that appointment was preceded by two years of hustings. From what I have heard, I am sure that Terry would have stolen the show at caucuses and primaries from Iowa and New Hampshire, through to Super Tuesday.

So what of T3 and T4, particularly in the domestic setting? Well, Mr Chancellor, Terry Davies loves his family pets, and what better names could there be for a thyrologist's turtles than...T3 and T4. Sadly, Mr Chancellor, T4 is no longer with us. Clearly Terry had a premonition of this succession when he named them, because T3 is well recognised to have the longest "half-life", and is the most biologically potent thyroid hormone in the circulation.

Fortunately, T3 is not alone, being accompanied by Terry's dog, parrot, and rooster. I wonder what names he has given them? Adrenalin, oestrogen, and surely the rooster must be called testosterone.

And what of Terry's other passions? Well, they include beaches in the winter (to solve scientific conundrums), apple pie (which unfortunately is not on tonight's menu), and (worst of all, Mr Chancellor, I am ashamed to say), Manchester City Football Club.

Despite leaving Newcastle over 30 years ago, and becoming a leading figure in American medicine, he retains his northern English brogue and, has, more importantly for us, not forgotten his Alma Mater. As Founder of the Board of United States Friends of Newcastle University, he has been pivotal in raising substantial funds to support scholarships and studentships through his intimate knowledge of the local financial infrastructure. In recognition of his work in developing the activities of the Friends, the Board unanimously elected him Honorary President, where he continues to play an active role in meetings and events.

Mr Chancellor, Professor Terry Davies' colleagues describe him as "larger than life", boundlessly enthusiastic, exceptionally hard working, and an excellent clinician with a sharp scientific brain. Despite an overloaded schedule, he always finds time to fly the Newcastle flag across the pond, where he remains our warm, loyal, and very practical supporter. I therefore ask that you award him an Honorary Fellowship of the Newcastle University.

14/10/12