



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Burkitt Medal

General Information

Established in 2013, the Burkitt Medal is designed to recognise people with the integrity, compassion and dedication matching that of Denis Burkitt, a Trinity graduate, who is known for his discovery of Burkitt lymphoma.

Purpose of the Burkitt Medal:

The Burkitt Medal represents an opportunity for Trinity to acknowledge outstanding achievements of practitioners and researchers in cancer, preferably connected with Trinity through some form of collaboration, or with a potential to establish closer links with Trinity and cancer researchers in particular. It is also a channel for raising profile of the quality work conducted by Trinity academics and of Trinity's rich heritage.

Reason for investing in Burkitt Medal:

- Raise profile of Trinity achievements in cancer research
- The committee to be aware of the strategic importance of each a candidate potential to be connected with Trinity
- A good way of building collaborations with eminent researchers

Nomination Procedure (see below nomination form)

- Anyone can nominate
- Completed nomination forms to be received by 1th March 2017
- Call for nominations are by: internal email/listings/notice board
- One nomination from each individual
- Review will be by selection committee which is chaired by a person appointed by the Provost (see terms of reference awards ctte.)

Candidate Eligibility:

- Nominees should have demonstrated extraordinary achievement and advancement in their field
- If candidate has already received an award from TCD – e.g. Honorary Degree – must be 5 years from date of that award
- TCD staff are not eligible for awards

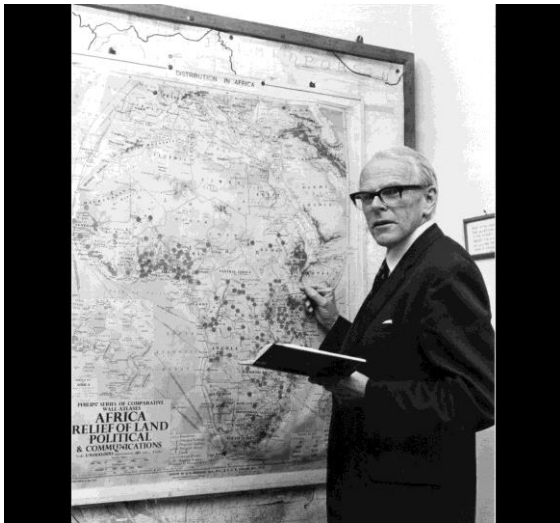
Terms of Reference of Selection Committee:

- Chair will be appointed by the Provost.
- The Provost (or nominee) and the Chair will agree a committee of five members representing STEM and Health Sciences to be proposed to the University Council.
- To ensure proper alignment between Honorary Degree process, the Registrar (or nominee) should be on the committee.
- Chair and at least two of the committee membership will be rotated every year. No person may serve more than three consecutive years on the committee (except the Registrar if the Registrar chooses to serve on the Committee)
- Committee will propose a candidate and a backup candidate to the Provost.

Criteria for Selection/Guidelines for Selection Committee:

- Candidates must be pre-eminent and excel in their chosen field.
- Preferable connection with Trinity.
- Candidate must attend the awards ceremony. If they are unable to attend their name will be put forward for consideration by the committee the following year.
- Winners are "obvious" choices i.e. few could dispute their receiving an award.
- Candidate will potentially attract wider community to a lecture.event.
- Two candidates should be chosen, with one as a 'backup'. The backup will automatically go forward for nomination the following year.
- Candidates will be written to by Provost informing them of nomination & selection.
- If candidate declines, Provost writes to a 'backup' candidate.
- Once accepted, the contact is made with the awardee to go organise the logistics and events around the person's visit to Trinity.

ABOUT DENIS PARSONS BURKITT



Denis Parsons Burkitt (28 February 1911 – 23 March 1993), surgeon, was born in Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, Ireland. He was the son of James Parsons Burkitt, a civil engineer. Aged eleven Denis lost his right eye in an accident. He attended Portora Royal School in Enniskillen and Dean Close School, England. In 1929 he applied to Trinity College Dublin to study his father's profession, engineering, despite a tutor writing to his father expressing doubts if Burkitt would be capable of earning a degree. During his first year at Trinity he joined Room 40, a small group of undergraduates, who met regularly for prayer and Bible study, and committed his life to Jesus Christ. His religious convictions would be a driving force for the rest of his life. Soon after his commitment to Christianity, he felt that God was calling him to devote his life to medicine. He changed his study to medicine and graduated with his MB on 5 July, 1935. After graduating from Trinity College Dublin he continued his surgical training and obtained Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh in 1938. He went on to write his MD entitled 'Spontaneous rupture of abdominal viscera' in 1947.

While serving as a ship's surgeon in 1938, Burkitt decided he would be a surgeon first and a missionary second and hoped to work with the Colonial Service in West Africa. During his five-year sojourn as an army surgeon during World War Two, he married Olive Mary Rogers, a trainee nurse he had met while working as the Resident Surgical Officer at the Prince of Wales Hospital in Plymouth. Denis and Olive had three daughters Judy Howard, Cas and Rachel.

Despite having his application to the Colonial Office being turned down on account of his loss of sight, Burkitt passed a medical and enlisted into the Royal Army Medical Corps. He was posted to a military hospital in Mombasa.

Burkitt 'made two major contributions to medical science related to his experience in Africa.

The first was the description, distribution, and ultimately, the etiology of a pediatric cancer that bears his name 'Burkitt's lymphoma'. Burkitt in 1957 observed a child with swellings in the angles of the jaw. Having an intensely enquiring mind, Burkitt took the details of these cases to the records department, which showed that jaw tumours were common, were often associated with other tumours at unusual sites in children in Uganda. He kept copious notes and 'concluded that these apparently different childhood cancers were all manifestations of a single, hitherto unrecognized tumour complex'. Burkitt published *A sarcoma involving the jaws of African children*. The newly identified cancer became known as 'Burkitt's lymphoma'. He went on to map the geographical distribution of the tumour. Burkitt, together with Dr Dennis Wright, published a book titled 'Burkitt's Lymphoma' in April 1970.

His second major contribution came when, on his return to Britain, Burkitt compared the pattern of diseases in African hospitals with Western diseases. He concluded that many Western diseases which were rare in Africa were the result of diet and lifestyle. He wrote a book *Don't Forget Fibre in your Diet*, which was an international bestseller.

Although one study showed that people who eat very low levels of fiber—less than 10 grams per day—had an 18 percent higher risk of colorectal cancer, the more general idea that colon cancer is a fiber deficiency disease is now generally considered incorrect by cancer researchers. Nevertheless, research suggests that a diet high in dietary fiber is advised as a precaution against other diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. He had an alternative theory, published in numerous articles and books, that the use of the natural squatting position for defecation protects the natives of Africa and Asia from gastrointestinal diseases.

Burkitt was president of the Christian Medical Fellowship and wrote frequently on religious/medical themes. He received the Bower Award and Prize in 1992. He died on 23 March 1993 in Gloucester and was buried in Bisley, Gloucestershire, England.

Burkitt Medal Awardee 2016 – Paul Brennan, PhD

Paul Brennan, PhD, is the Head of the Genetics Section of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), Lyon, France. IARC is the specialised cancer agency of the World Health Organization (WHO) with the objective to promote international collaboration in cancer research. Dr Brennan's primary area of work is conducting very large multi-partner studies that aim to use genetics to understand the causes of cancer. This is done by exploring the genome of individuals who develop cancer, in order to identify clues as to why they are more susceptible. It also involves investigating the genomes of the tumours, in order to identify what triggered the tumour in the first place. His group works with colleagues in many different parts of the world, with active studies underway in central and eastern Europe, central and south-east Asia, and Latin America. Among others, Dr Brennan has collaborators in Trinity College Dublin. Dr Brennan and his colleagues at IARC have made an outstanding contribution to promoting international collaboration in the study of cancer for the ultimate benefit of those affected by the disease.

Burkitt Medal Awardee 2015 – Riccardo Dalla-Favera, MD, MSc

Riccardo Dalla-Favera is Professor of Pathology & Cell Biology and Director, Institute for Cancer Genetics at Columbia University, New York, USA. Professor Dalla-Favera's career started with his pioneering work on the cloning and chromosomal mapping of human proto-oncogenes, including c-MYC. This work established the basis for the seminal work on the involvement of c-MYC in chromosomal translocations in Burkitt's lymphoma. His research has continued to yield new insights into the pathogenesis of human B cell lymphomas, and, in particular, on the identification of the genetic lesions and biological mechanisms responsible for the development of these diseases.

Burkitt Medal Awardee 2014 – John L. Ziegler, MD, MSc

John Ziegler, Founding Director, Global Health Sciences Graduate Program University of California San Francisco (UCSF), USA, received his undergraduate degree (BA, English Literature) from Amherst College, Amherst Massachusetts, and his MD from Cornell University Medical School in New York City. Following medical house staff training at Bellevue Hospital in New York, he joined the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in 1966, beginning a life-long career in cancer research and care. In 1967 he was assigned to begin a long collaboration with Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, studying Burkitt's lymphoma and other indigenous cancers. Together with Ugandan counterparts, he developed curative therapies for lymphoma and established a cancer institute that today has expanded to a major center of excellence in sub Saharan Africa. After five years Ziegler returned to NCI to head clinical oncology, and in 1981 moved to UCSF. The AIDS pandemic made its first appearance in San Francisco, heralded by opportunistic infections and two malignancies – Kaposi's sarcoma and non Hodgkin's lymphoma. Ziegler and colleagues made important contributions to this field both in California and back in Uganda. In his later career, earning an MSc in epidemiology from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Ziegler headed a cancer genetics clinic at UCSF, and most recently was founding director of a global health Master's degree.

Burkitt Medal Awardee 2013 – Murray F. Brennan, MD

Born in Auckland, New Zealand, Dr. Murray Brennan received a degree in mathematics from the University of New Zealand and a medical degree from the University of Otago in 1964. In 1970 he worked at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, Harvard Medical School, and at the Joslin Research Laboratories. After residency at the Brigham, Dr. Brennan joined the National Cancer Institute. In 1981, he joined Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) as Chief of Gastric and Mixed Tumor Service. Dr. Brennan was Chairman of the Department of Surgery at MSKCC from 1985 until June of 2006. He currently holds the Benno C. Schmidt Chair in Clinical Oncology and is Director of the International Center and Vice President for International Programs at MSKCC. He has lectured throughout the world and authored and co-authored more than 1,000 scientific papers and book chapters focusing on surgical oncology, endocrinology, metabolism, and nutrition, and is the author of a book on soft tissue sarcoma. Dr Brennan received numerous honours for his contribution to oncology. Dr. Brennan's interest, in addition to patient care and research, has been the development of young surgeons.