

ATVB Named Lecture Reviews—Insight Into Author

ATVB Named Lecture Reviews—2014 Jeffrey M. Hoeg Award Lecture

Insight Into the Author: Catherine C. Hedrick, PhD, Division of Inflammation Biology, La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology, La Jolla, CA



Why did you choose the profession of scientific investigation?

I loved playing with a chemistry set growing up, and I also enjoyed collecting rocks and learning about space and planets. I remember telling my Mom when I was young that I wanted to “be a scientist” when I grew up. In school, biology was my favorite class. I also loved organic chemistry!

Who have been your role model(s) in your scientific and professional life?

Many people, and for all different reasons. Over the years, I have received wonderful scientific and professional advice from Jake Lusis, Alan Daugherty, Mary Sorci-Thomas, Kathryn Moore, Judy Berliner, and Klaus Ley. All are amazing scientists and wonderful role models.

What have been important influences on your professional life?

Moving to the La Jolla Institute (LJI) has been a tremendous help to my career. The scientific environment at LJI is outstanding. Serving on NIH study sections, particularly the NHLBI Program Project Grant Parent Committee, has helped shape my career. I get a lot of joy from training postdoctoral fellows and graduate students—watching them develop scientifically is fun, rewarding, and makes me smile.

What are your scientific inspirations?

To perform accurate, honest, and innovative science. To make new discoveries about monocytes and macrophages in health and disease. To train the next generation of scientists.

How have mentors contributed to your professional development?

Larry Rudel taught me about experimental design and using appropriate controls. Alan Fogelman taught me how to write. Jake Lusis taught me to have the courage to explore new scientific areas, even if the project seemed a little risky. Judy Berliner helped me believe in myself.

If you knew then what you know now, would you do anything different?

I think I would stress and worry less as an Assistant Professor. No more writing grants at 3 am. I would say “no” more often to the endless requests to serve on multiple university committees in order to meet service requirements for promotion and tenure.

What wisdom do you impart on new investigators?

(a) Keep your grants simple. Reviewers are knowledgeable, but are not always experts in your exact field. (b) Study only the science projects that you love. (c) Say “no” more often. (d) Work hard and play hard.

If you were not a scientist, which profession would you pick?

I can't imagine doing anything else!

This Insight Into ATVB Authors was originally published as part of the ATVB Named Lecture Review series. The original article is available online at <http://atvb.ahajournals.org/content/36/9/1722.full>

(*Arterioscler Thromb Vasc Biol.* 2017;37:1455-1456. DOI: 10.1161/ATV.0000000000000064.)

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Arterioscler Thromb Vasc Biol is available at <http://atvb.ahajournals.org>

DOI: 10.1161/ATV.0000000000000064

Which direction do you envisage your science taking?

I am always interested in learning new things, so studying epigenetics and noncoding RNAs are intriguing. Also, doing more human immunology—translating our immunology findings in mice to human disease.

What are your nonscientific activities?

Running, working out, spending time with my family, enjoying a nice glass of wine and a La Jolla sunset.

What sports do you follow?

Football! Go Pats!

What are your favorite books, movies, music (pick one or all)?

Music—I like Coldplay, Imagine Dragons, and believe it or not, some EDM and hip-hop. Martin Garrix is my teenage son's influence, of course. Unfortunately, I am probably the only Mom at my son's school who knows the lyrics to "Trap Queen" by Fetty Wap!

What are your favorite foods and are they heart healthy?

Is wine a food? Seriously though, I love broccolini, kale, salmon, carrots. Those are heart healthy. The not-so-healthy foods are steaks and chocolate. Both are favs.

Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology



JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

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Arterioscler Thromb Vasc Biol. 2017;37:1455-1456

doi: 10.1161/ATV.0000000000000064

Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology is published by the American Heart Association, 7272 Greenville Avenue, Dallas, TX 75231

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Print ISSN: 1079-5642. Online ISSN: 1524-4636

The online version of this article, along with updated information and services, is located on the World Wide Web at:

<http://atvb.ahajournals.org/content/37/8/1455>

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