MBL 2012 SPECIAL LECTURE SERIES

ABOUT THE JOE L. MARTINEZ, JR. AND JAMES G. TOWNSEL ENDOWED LECTURESHIP IN SPINES

Joe L. Martinez, Jr., Ph.D. has been training students for over thirty years. In 1994 he received the American Association for the Advancement of Science Mentor Award for Lifetime Achievement. The inscription on the award reads, “For having guided the lives of literally thousands of students and hundreds of women and minorities to educational pursuits and careers in science as a teacher, advisor, role model, friend, and confidant.” A recent anonymous reviewer of one of his grants said, “Joe Martinez is one of the top mentors in the nation…Everything that Joe Martinez does is done extremely well and with passion. He is a national treasure.” For 20 years he has directed the American Psychological Association Diversity Program in Neuroscience funded by National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to support the training of doctoral and postdoctoral students. To date over 218 predoctoral and 35 postdoctoral students have participated in SPINES and 117 of these earned their doctoral degree. He is the co-director (along with James Townsel) of the MBL Summer Program in Neuroscience, Ethics, and Survival (SPINES) course, supported by NIMH and designed to enhance the success of doctoral and postdoctoral students underrepresented in science. He served for 15 years, as a full professor, in one of the nation’s most prestigious institutions, the University of California, Berkeley. Currently he holds the Ewing Halsell Distinguished Chair at the University of Texas at San Antonio. His research is directed towards understanding how the brain stores memories. He investigates learning in animals, using behavioral, electrophysiological, and molecular techniques. He is currently conducting experiments using DNA gene chip technology looking for “memory genes.” He has over 175 publications. Students at all levels (postdoctoral, doctoral, masters and undergraduates) work in his laboratory to discover more about the brain’s workings. His book, “Neurobiology of Learning and Memory,” edited with Ray Kesner, is in its third edition and is popular with students. He is currently founder and Director of the Cajal Neuroscience Institute at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

James Townsel, Ph.D. was introduced to the horseshoe crab, Limulus polyphemus, as a potential research subject in 1963, while a graduate student in zoology/physiology at Purdue University, in West Lafayette, Indiana. Since there was not a ready supply of horseshoe crabs in Indiana, he became a regular recipient of shipments of animals from the MBL. His first trip to the MBL occurred in the summer of 1971, when, as a charter member of an NIH funded initiative titled Frontiers in Research and Teaching Program (FRTP), he took the neurobiology course. In 1972, he returned to the MBL as a FRTP research fellow. After completing a two-year postdoctoral fellowship with Ed Kravitz in the Department of Neurobiology at Harvard Medical School in 1973, he accepted a faculty position at Meharry Medical College. In the summer of 1974, he returned to the MBL as the coordinator of the FRTP program. Among the FRTP recruits in that year was Joe Martinez. Funding for the FRTP ended in 1974. From 1974 until 1986, Townsel’s career trajectory included a six-year span, 1978-1984, when he served as an associate dean in the College of Medicine at the University of Illinois. He served his last four years there as an associate vice chancellor. In 1984 he returned to Meharry Medical College to chair the Department of Physiology. In 1986 he returned to the MBL where joined Joe Martinez in launching the forerunner of the SPINES course. He has returned each year since. His personal commitment to providing educational opportunities to underrepresented minorities is reflected in the fact that he trained eight African American Ph.D.’s. His longtime commitment to the SPINES program at the MBL has been consistent with his life-long commitment to increasing diversity in the biomedical workforce.

Tuesday, June 19

THE JOE L. MARTINEZ, JR. AND JAMES G. TOWNSEL ENDOWED LECTURESHIP IN SPINES

“Neuroprotective and anti-inflammatory effects of neuregulin-1 in stroke and acute brain injuries”

Byron Ford, Morehouse School of Medicine

Speck Auditorium, 6:00 PM

Lectures are free and open to the public.