



Press release – 9 April 2015

The Bettencourt Schueller Foundation reveals the varied and far-reaching list of the winners of its scientific prizes, which, with a total value of €1.9 million, are awarded for high-level biomedical research.

The projects of the top prizewinners are characterised by original themes, enthusiasm, and risk-taking applied to human health and a wide variety of disciplines in biomedical research.

“In research, one needs passion, creativity, work, time... and a little luck,” says Professor Hugues de Thé, the new Chairman of the Foundation’s Scientific Board. As evidenced by the personalities and work of this year’s six top prizewinners, who are involved in the following disciplines:

• **Neurosciences:**

- shedding light on the workings of memory, right down to neuron level, in order to find out what makes the behaviour of every individual unique;
- exploring the functioning of the brain *in vivo*, by selective activation of neurons using light;
- exploring the mechanisms of Huntington’s disease in the depths of neurons.

• **Immunology and Microbiology**

- characterising giant viruses in order to revisit the foundations of virology;
- drawing the genealogical tree of the cells of the immune system.

• **Cell biology:**

- determining the destination of stem cells by modulating their environment.

The 20 prizewinners on this list were honoured at two separate ceremonies.

On 7 April 2015 at the Institut de France, Françoise Bettencourt Meyers, President of the Foundation, awarded the **Coups d’Élan Prizes for French Research**, in the presence of the Foundation’s two partners, namely Inserm (French National Institute of Health and Medical Research) and CNRS (French National Centre for Scientific Research), along with eminent representatives from the French scientific community. They were awarded to four prominent public research laboratories, and are aimed at optimising infrastructures and working conditions for researchers, i.e. remodelling, renovation, acquisition of equipment, etc. They also enable laboratories to acquire operational support.



Front row, left to right: Valentina Emiliani, Neurophonic Laboratory, Centre Universitaire des Saints Pères, **CNRS** / Paris Descartes University, prizewinner;
Catherine Jessus, Director, Institute of Biological Sciences (INSB), **CNRS**;
Frédéric Saudou, Grenoble Institute of Neuroscience (GIN), **Inserm** / Université Joseph Fourier / Grenoble University Hospital, prizewinner;
Chantal Abergel, Structural and Genomic Information Laboratory (IGS), Mediterranean Institute of Microbiology (IMM), **CNRS** / Aix-Marseille University;
Yves Lévy, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Inserm.
Back row, left to right: Olivier Brault, Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation;
Hugues de Thé, Chairman of the Scientific Board of the Foundation;
Manuel Théry, University Institute of Haematology (IUH), Saint Louis Hospital, **Inserm** / CEA, prizewinner.

To date, 50 French laboratories and over 500 researchers have already been awarded the Coups d’Élan Prize for French Research, with an individual value of €250,000.

On 8 April 2015, the Foundation's other prizes were awarded at a ceremony at the home of Liliane Bettencourt, Honorary President of the Foundation:

Scott Waddell, Professor of Neurobiology at the University of Oxford, received the **Liliane Bettencourt Prize for Life Sciences**. The **ATIP-Avenir Programme** grant was awarded to **Leïla Perié (Physical Chemistry Curie Unit, CNRS / UPMC / Institut Curie)** who, having returned to France, will establish her research team at Institut Curie, Paris. The **Prizes for Young Researchers** were awarded to 14 young researchers in science and/or medicine to enable them to carry out post-doctoral research in the best laboratories abroad.



Front row, left to right:

Prof. Nicole Le Douarin, member of the Foundation's Scientific Board, **Fred Etoc, prizewinner**, Prof. Alain Pompidou, member of the Scientific Board, Prof. Hugues de Thé, Chairman of the Scientific Board, Prof. Emiliana Borrelli, member of the Scientific Board, **Scott Waddell, winner of the Liliane Bettencourt Prize for Life Sciences**, Olivier Brault, Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation, Françoise Bettencourt Meyers, President of the Foundation, Jean-Pierre Meyers, Vice-President of the Foundation, Liliane Bettencourt, Honorary President of the Foundation, Nicolas Meyers, member of the Board of Directors of the Foundation.

Back row, left to right:

Mandy Muller, Grégory Franck, Hervé Turlier, Paul Monnier, Edouard Hannezo, Denis Jallet, Jean-Rémi King, Paul Blanche, Fanny Langlet, Maël Lebreton, Séverine Martini, Sébastien Paque, winners of the Prize for Young Researchers; Dr Marcel Méchali, Prof. Alain-Jacques Valleron, Prof. Cédric Blanpain, member of the Foundation's Scientific Board; Armand de Boissière, Secretary General of the Foundation.

Bettencourt Schueller Foundation

Supporting deployment of talent to contribute to the common good

The Bettencourt Schueller Foundation is fulfilling the mission it was given twenty-five years ago by its founders, André and Liliane Bettencourt and their daughter Françoise Bettencourt Meyers, to “give talent wings” to contribute to the success and influence of France.

This mission is expressed in three areas of involvement: life sciences, culture and solidarity. It is driven by the convictions that define a spirit and ways of working, for the greater good, without gain, and with a purpose of social responsibility.

In the last five years, the Foundation has distributed nearly €113 million, including €36 million in 2014. Since 1990, 332 scientific prizes have been awarded to over 5,000 researchers. In total, the Bettencourt Schueller Foundation has awarded, since 1990, a cumulative total of €257 million in donations to support the life sciences.

Further information: www.fondationbs.org

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