



PROFESSOR JEAN-LAURENT CASANOVA RECEIVES THE INBEV-BAILLET LATOUR HEALTH PRIZE 2011 FOR HIS PIONEERING RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND IMMUNOLOGY

The InBev-Baillet Latour Fund has awarded its 2011 Health Prize, the most important scientific Prize in Belgium, to Professor Jean-Laurent Casanova, Professor at the University of Rockefeller in New York and Professor of Paediatrics at the Necker Hospital in Paris. The theme of this year's Prize is infectious diseases and immunology. Professor Casanova was honoured on account of his pioneering research in the field of infectious diseases in children: he was the first to show that determinism in paediatric infectious diseases can be genetically determined.

Belgium's most important scientific Prize

The InBev-Baillet Latour Fund was established to promote an important realization in the area of science, academy or art. Since 1979, the InBev-Baillet Latour Fund has been awarding the InBev-Baillet Latour Health Prize to a scientist for his or her contribution in the ambit of medical scientific research and/or its practical application. Since 2000, the Prize has been awarded annually. Contrary to other international scientific prizes, this Prize is not only intended to promote fundamental research, but also its practical application. The Prize, of a value of 250,000 euro, is the most important science prize being awarded in Belgium.

The Prize rewards medical research in one of the five research areas selected by a scientific committee. This Scientific Committee, chaired by Professor Rik Casteels (K.U.Leuven), organises the Prize with the support of the Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique-FNRS (F.R.S.-FNRS) and the Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek-Vlaanderen (FWO). The Scientific Committee constitutes annually an international jury, consisting of seven members, including one Belgian.

The InBev-Baillet Latour Health Prize 2011, on the theme of "Infectious diseases and Immunology", was awarded to Professor Casanova for his pioneering research in the field of **infectious diseases in children**.

Hereditability, the cause of several infectious diseases in children

Professor Casanova was first to prove that certain fatal infections in children are the result of single-gene hereditary immune deficiency. He discovered through research that changing a specific gene could lead to **severe forms of infectious diseases**. In particular Professor Casanova identified specific genetic variations that lead to tuberculosis, serious pneumococcal infections and chronic candidiasis.

This is one of the most phenomenal discoveries in human genetics. Infectious diseases are after all often considered as environmental diseases. Professor Cassanova was the first to indicate that a predisposition to infectious diseases in children can actually be genetically determined. This revolutionary discovery in the field of pediatric infectious diseases offer families over the whole world the opportunity of a molecular diagnosis, genetic advice and correct treatments so as to repair the immune deficiency.

Jean-Laurent Casanova, Professor at the Rockefeller University and associate professor of pediatrics in the Necker hospital in Paris: winner of the InBev-Baillet Latour Health Prize 2011



Jean-Laurent Casanova is professor at the Rockefeller University in New York as well as associate professor at the Necker pediatric hospital in Paris. Along with Laurent Abel, who is associate professor at Rockefeller University, he co-directs the laboratory of the Necker pediatric hospital. This trans-Atlantic cooperation is a particular and remarkable advantage for this unique clinical research programme. Their cooperation with pediatricians over the whole world clearly demonstrates the benefits of such an international clinical trial network in approaching these important and complex problems. His work was already crowned with important scientific distinctions. Before coming to the United States, from 2005 through 2008, he was an international member of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and member of EMBO and ASCI. Professor Casanova was also the winner of the International Lucien Dautrebande Prize in 2004 from the Academy of Medicine, Belgium and of the Richard Lounsbery Award of the National Academy of Sciences of USA, and of the French Academy of Sciences¹.

¹ For more detailed information concerning the educational background, awards and publications of Prof.Casanova, please see the biography in the addendum.

Scientific Committee of the InBev-Baillet Latour Health Prize 2011

The Scientific Committee is responsible for the scientific supervision of the **InBev-Baillet Latour Health Prize**. The Committee is chaired by Professor Rik Casteels (K.U.Leuven). The other members are Prof. Jacques Brotchi (ULB), Prof. Désiré Collen (K.U.Leuven), Prof. Walter Fiers (UGent) and Prof. Guy Rousseau (UCL). The F.R.S-FNRS provides the administrative and logistical support.

Jury of the InBev-Baillet Latour Health Prize 2011

Chairman : Prof. Rolf ZINKERNAGEL, University Hospital, Zürich

Jury members :

Prof. François BARRÉ-SINOUSSE, Institut Pasteur Paris

Prof. Walter FIERS, Department of Molecular Biomedical Research, Gent University

Prof. Jörg HACKER, President Leopoldina National Academy of Sciences, Halle

Prof. Sir Andrew McMICHAEL, John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford

Prof. Thomas F. MEYER, Max Planck Institute for Infection Biology, Berlin

Prof. Ulf PETTERSSON, Rudbeck laboratory, Uppsala University

Prof. Alan SHER, National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases, NIH Bethesda

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F.R.S.-FNRS

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FWO

www.fwo.be



THE FUND INBEV - BAILLET LATOUR

The **INBEV-BAILLET LATOUR FUND** was founded in 1974 by Count Alfred de Baillet Latour, Member of the Board of Directors of Brasseries Artois from 1947 to 1980. Its objective is to encourage work of great value to humanity, of a mainly scientific, educational or artistic nature, and to reward such work by means of prizes or study grants, excluding any profit motive and regardless of political, trade union, philosophical or religious convictions. The InBev-Baillet Latour Fund is active in the following main areas: medical research, Belgian heritage, university education and the Olympic movement.

In the area of medical research, the InBev-Baillet Latour Fund has been awarding the **InBev-Baillet Latour Health Prize** since 1979. This prize, currently worth 250,000 euros is one of the most important science prizes awarded in Belgium. Since 2006, the InBev-Baillet Latour Fund also awards the **Clinical Research Prize**, which each year supports two young Belgian research scientists one from each community in the country. In addition, since 2008, the Fund is financing research into rare tropical diseases at the **Antwerp Institute for Tropical Medicine**.

In the field of education, the Fund finances the **University Chair at the UCL/KUL (Catholic University of Louvain)**, established in June 2000 to promote research into relations between the European Union and Russia. The fund also finances a **Euromarketing Chair at the Solvay Business School**.

As from 2008/2009 the Fund will also finance a new **Chair with the KUL/UCL on the relationship Europe-China**, as well as a **Chair** on the same subject at the **College of Europe**.

In addition, the Fund awards **study grants** to doctoral students conducting scientific research into the field of brewing, to students conducting research into relations between Russia and the European Union, to Belgian students attending the **College of Europe** and the **Royal Institute for cultural Heritage**. Since 2008 the Fund yearly supports 5 young musicians at the **Queen Elisabeth College of Music**.

In 2002, the Fund launched a new initiative, the **InBev-Baillet Latour Programme for the Restoration of Belgian Cultural Heritage**, who yearly ensures the restoration of important cultural objects. The Fund also finances the realisation of 6 rooms Art Deco/Art Nouveau at the KMKG (Koninklijke Musea voor Kunst en Geschiedenis).

The Fund further intends to provide financial support to the Olympic movement and to Belgian athletes both through the **COIB-BOIC (Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee)** and with respect to the **Special Olympics** (mentally handicapped) and **Paralympics** (physically handicapped).

The Fund also finances an **Olympic Chair Henri de Baillet Latour - Jacques Rogge at the universities UGent and UCL**.

The Fund also demonstrates its concern for the environment and for sustainable development through the support of various initiatives in this field. It awards an **Environment Prize** to a private company manager for an ecological land management project in Belgium. It has also teamed up with the International Polar Foundation through the award of scientific research grants for the study of climate change, partly at the Princess Elisabeth Station, the **Antarctica InBev-Baillet Latour Fellowship Award**, as well as the funding of the scientific equipment for the station.

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