In addition to his many contributions to basic research, Bill Larsen loved to teach and was much appreciated by his students. His exceptional ability was reflected in the four teaching awards he received as a professor at the University of Cincinnati. Notably, he was the author of Human Embryology, a textbook for medical students that was the first to incorporate modern experimental research into a subject that had traditionally been taught in a strictly descriptive style. On its initial publication in 1998 it was hailed as, “a magnificent book...” by the European Medical Journal. With the release of the fourth edition in 2008, the book was renamed Larsen’s Human Embryology in recognition of Dr. Larsen’s place as the originator of this revolutionary text.

Bill Larsen’s stellar scientific career would be enough for most people, but Bill pursued his numerous and varied interests with such extraordinary passion, energy, and skill that he seemed to have more hours in a day than the ordinary person. He was fascinated with the American Southwest, and studied and collected traditional arts and crafts of the Hopi, Zuni, and Navajo peoples. He was a woodworker who built three harpsichords and a fortepiano for his wife, and, with his two children, over 100 pieces of gallery-quality furniture. In addition, he loved to regale his friends, colleagues, and students with jokes and stories, and to share his love for gourmet cooking. It is this spirit of generosity, enthusiasm, and innovation that inspires this lecture series, offered in honor of a beloved and esteemed colleague who is sincerely missed.
About William J. Larsen, Ph.D.

William J. Larsen, PhD was a gifted scientist, consistently producing research at the forefront of cell, developmental, and reproductive biology. Early in his career he published a landmark paper that conclusively established mitochondrial fission as the mechanism of mitochondrial biogenesis. He went on to become the first to demonstrate the endocytosis of gap junctions. Moreover, his work on the hormonal regulation of gap junction formation and growth culminated in an authoritative review article in Tissue and Cell, “Structural Diversity of Gap Junctions (1988),” which became a Citation Classic.

Throughout his career, his sixty-seven peer-reviewed publications—not to mention numerous invited reviews, abstracts, and book chapters—covered a wide range of research areas including adrenal cortical tumor cells, human ovarian carcinomas, preterm labor, cumulus expansion, oocyte transcription factor YY1 (Yin Yang 1 for its ability to both activate and repress transcription), which plays a critical role in many important biological processes. He began his independent research career at Harvard Medical School as a tenure track assistant professor and received tenure and full professorship in the Department of Pathology at Harvard in 2004. In 2009, he joined the Newborn Medicine Division of Boston Children’s Hospital and held a Merton Bernfield Professorship. He became the inaugural C.H. Waddington Professor of Pediatrics of Harvard in 2018. Shi joined the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, Oxford University in 2020. His honors include Ray Wu Prize (2009), election to the American Association for the Advancement of Science (2011), American Cancer Society Research Professor (2012), election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2016), the National Cancer Institute Outstanding Investigator Award (2017) and election to the AACR Academy (2022).

Yang Shi, Ph.D.

Yang Shi received his PhD from New York University where he studied regulation of a multi-gene family in mice. He carried out postdoctoral research in the lab of Dr. Thomas Shenk at Princeton University where he discovered the transcription factor YY1 (Yin Yang 1 for its ability to both activate and repress transcription), which plays a critical role in many important biological processes. He began his independent research career at Harvard Medical School as a tenure track assistant professor and received tenure and full professorship in the Department of Pathology at Harvard in 2004. In 2009, he joined the Newborn Medicine Division of Boston Children’s Hospital and held a Merton Bernfield Professorship. He became the inaugural C.H. Waddington Professor of Pediatrics of Harvard in 2018. Shi joined the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, Oxford University in 2020. His honors include Ray Wu Prize (2009), election to the American Association for the Advancement of Science (2011), American Cancer Society Research Professor (2012), election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2016), the National Cancer Institute Outstanding Investigator Award (2017) and election to the AACR Academy (2022).

Past Larsen Lecturers

- **Lewis Cantley, Ph.D.**
  - Meyer Director and Professor of Cancer Biology, Sandra and Edward Meyer Cancer Center, Weill Cornell Medicine, New York, NY
- **Beth Levine, M.D.**
  - Professor, Internal Medicine & Microbiology, Charles Cameron Sprague Distinguished Chair in Biomedical Science, Howard Hughes Medical Institute
- **Benjamin G. Neel, M.D., Ph.D.**
  - Professor of Medicine, Director, Laura and Isaac Perlmutter Cancer Center at NYU Langone Health
- **Joan S. Brugge, Ph.D.**
  - Department of Cell Biology, Harvard Medical School
- **Stephen J. Weiss, M.D.**
  - Upjohn Professor of Medicine and Oncology Research Professor, Life Sciences Institute
- **David C. Chan, M.D., Ph.D.**
  - HHMI Investigator, California Institute of Technology
- **Roel Nusse, Ph.D.**
  - Virginia & Daniel K. Ludwig Professor of Cancer Research, Professor of Developmental Biology, Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator, Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine, Stanford University School of Medicine
- **Eric F. Wieschaus, Ph.D.**
  - Squibb Professor In Molecular Biology Nobel Laureate/HHMI Investigator, Princeton University
- **Allan C. Spradling, Ph.D.**
  - Director, Department of Embryology, Carnegie Institution of Washington Baltimore, Maryland
- **Lewis Cantley, Ph.D.**
  - Meyer Director and Professor of Cancer Biology, Sandra and Edward Meyer Cancer Center, Weill Cornell Medicine, New York, NY
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