

BIOGRAPHIES

Meeting of the Research Advisory Committee on Veterans' Gulf War Illnesses

RAC-GWVI

Nov 18, 2020

RAC-GWVI LEADERSHIP

Lawrence Steinman, M.D. Dr. Lawrence Steinman, RAC-GWVI Chair, received his BA in physics from Dartmouth College, graduating Magna Cum Laude in 1968, and graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1973. He did an internship and residency in neurology at Stanford University and from 1974 to 1977 and was a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Chemical Immunology at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel, receiving an NIH post-doctoral Fellowship. Dr. Steinman is Board Certified in Neurology and Psychiatry, is Senior Attending Physician at Stanford's Hospitals, the Zimmerman Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology, and from 2002 to 2011 he served as Chairman of the Interdepartmental Immunology Program. He received teaching awards during this time, particularly for his course on the Brain and the Immune System. He served in 2014–2015 on the Institute of Medicine–National Academy of Science panel on Considerations for Designing an Epidemiologic Study for Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and Other Neurologic Disorders in Pre and Post 9/11 Gulf War Veterans. Dr. Steinman received numerous honors: From 1988 to 2002 he twice received the Senator Jacob Javits Neuroscience Investigator Award from the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke. In 1994, he won the Friedrich Sasse Prize from the Free University of Berlin. In 2004, he won the John Dystel Prize from the American Academy of Neurology and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. In 2008, he received an Honorary Doctorate from Hasselt University. In 2009, he was elected to the Institute of Medicine, now called the National Academy of Medicine. In 2011, Dr. Steinman won the Charcot Prize for Lifetime Achievement in MS research from the International Federation of MS Societies. In 2015, he received the Cerami Award in Translational Medicine. In 2017, he was elected a Fellow of the American Association for Advancement of Science. In 2015, he became the first neuroimmunologist elected to the National Academy of Sciences. Dr. Steinman's research focuses on what provokes relapses and remission in multiple sclerosis, the nature of the molecules that serve as a brake on the brain inflammation, and the quest for a tolerizing vaccine for autoimmune diseases like type 1 diabetes and neuromyelitis optica. He has developed two antigen-specific therapies, using DNA vaccines, for MS and type 1 diabetes. He was senior author on the seminal 1992 *Nature* article that reported the key role of a particular integrin in brain inflammation. This research led to the development of the drug Tysabri, which is used to treat patients with MS and Crohn's disease. Dr. Steinman holds patents in the areas of immunology and for therapies of Huntington Disease, type 1 diabetes, and MS. He cofounded Neurocrine Biosciences, Bayhill Therapeutics now named Tolerion, Nuon Therapeutics, Transparency Life Sciences, and Atreca.

Karen Block, Ph.D. Dr. Karen Block, RAC-GWVI Designated Federal Officer (DFO), is a nationally and internationally recognized expert in the field of molecular mechanisms driving human disease with focus on the role of oxidative stress in carcinogenesis, cancer-drug resistance, and diabetes-induced organ damage. Academically, Dr. Block was an Associate Professor of Medicine who served as an Executive member of the Cancer Therapy and Research Center and Associate Director of Shared Resources at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and was a health research scientist with the VA since 2005. Her career is balanced with solid independent National Institutes of Health and VA funding achievements, publication of scientific manuscripts in high impact factor journals, authorship of expert review articles and book chapters, participation in and chairing of grant reviews and University programs as well as steering committees, and performance of site visits in addition to training clinician- and non-clinician-scientists. She joined the Office of Research and Development in Washington D.C. in 2016.

Marsha Turner, M.S.Ed. Marsha Turner, RAC-GWVI Acting Managing Director and Alternate Designated Federal Officer, has extensive experience in clinical and coordinated research initiatives with career focus on chronic unexplained medical conditions and stress-related disorders. Ms. Turner is currently working with the Gulf War Research Resource at the Cooperative Studies and Epidemiology Center (CSPEC) in Durham, North Carolina and has coordinated research initiatives within the VA since 2011. She has a strong interest in improving quality of life for families living with chronic health conditions.

RAC-GWVI MEETING PRESENTERS

Moragne Jeff, Director ACMO Mr. Jeffrey Moragne is the Director, Advisory Committee Management Officer, Department of Veterans Affairs. Prior to coming to this position, Mr. Moragne held various positions in the Department such as the Deputy Director Leading EDGE Program Management Office, Operations Director Corporate Senior Executive Management Office, Assistant Director in the Benefits Assistance Service, and Special Assistant for Strategic Planning to the Under Secretary for Benefits. Better known as "Boomer," he is an Air Force Academy graduate who served 27 years as a fighter pilot, joint service officer, and an accredited US diplomat retiring in 2008 as a Colonel. Boomer has a Master's degree in Aviation Science from Embry Riddle and is fluent in multiple languages. He has served in Europe, Asia and the Americas.