

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### **Congratulations to *JETO* Associate Editor Dr. Mina Bissell 2010 winner of the American Italian Cancer Foundation-Prize for Scientific Excellence in Medicine**

Dr. Mina Bissell has been named the winner of the 2010 American Italian Cancer Foundation-Prize for Scientific Excellence in Medicine for “having changed the accepted paradigms in cancer research, for pioneering to create the field of Tumor Micro-environment, and for the courage to persist not only until it is well accepted but also put to clinical use.” The award will be presented to Dr. Bissell at the organization’s annual meeting in New York on November 8.

Prior to the American Italian Cancer Foundation-Prize, Dr. Mina Bissell was elected to National Academy of Sciences Class of 2010 in April.

Mina Bissell, Distinguished Scientist with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)’s Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab) and award-winning cell and cancer biologist, and Alexis Bell, chemical engineer with joint appointments at Berkeley Lab and the University of California (UC) Berkeley, and a leading authority on catalysis, have been elected to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), one of the nation’s highest honors for a scientist. Bissell and Bell are among the 72 new members and 18 foreign associates to be invited this year into the prestigious scientific organization that was established in 1863 under President Lincoln. Their election to the academy brings the total number of Berkeley Lab NAS members to 63.

Bissell is universally recognized as the scientist who uncovered the critical role in cancer development played by a breast cell’s microenvironment. In 1982 she proposed that the extracellular matrix (ECM), a network of fibrous and globular proteins immediately surrounding a breast cell, is crucial to the breast cell’s normal functioning, and that ECM loss or damage can lead to malignancy. Conventional scientific wisdom at that time held the ECM to be nothing more than an inert scaffold upon which cells grew and developed. In the succeeding decades, Bissell’s experiments have established a clear picture as to how the ECM and the rest of a cell’s microenvironment regulate breast cell functions.

Bissell is a native of Iran, where she graduated as that nation’s top high school student and won a



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scholarship to study abroad. She chose to attend Bryn Mawr, where she studied chemistry before transferring to Radcliffe. While a senior at Radcliffe she won the medal of the American Institute of Chemists. She earned her Ph.D. in microbiology and molecular genetics from Harvard University, and came to the University of California’s Berkeley campus to do post-doctoral research in cell biology and virology. She joined the Berkeley Lab staff in 1972 and has served in numerous positions, including director of its Life Sciences Division, which she help found in 1992.

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