INTRODUCTION OF PRESIDENT BRUCE M. CHRISTENSEN

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Distinguished members of the American Society of Parasitologists (ASP) and honored guests, welcome to the Annual Presidential Address. It is my honor and privilege to represent the Society in introducing to you this year’s President, Dr. Bruce M. Christensen. Our Society is honored by this dedicated and highly accomplished professional who has served his colleagues and his discipline with admirable distinction. I am proud to know him and extremely fortunate to have him as a colleague and friend. In the short time allotted to me for introducing the president, I shall attempt to provide an overview of his professional accomplishments as well as a brief account of his nonscientific, artistic pursuits.

I met Bruce 27 yr ago at the ASP meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada. I was impressed by his energy, passion, and contagious enthusiasm for his studies involving insect host–parasite associations, specifically the innate immune responses manifested by various mosquito species in response to parasites, such as Dirofilaria immitis and Brugia malayi. He has maintained the same high level of excitement and enthusiasm for research throughout his career. Today, Bruce is recognized as an international authority on insect immunity and mosquito vector-borne diseases.

Bruce’s interest in the biological sciences, and in parasitology specifically, was fostered early in his undergraduate career while majoring in biology and chemistry at the University of Wisconsin–River Falls. As an undergraduate research assistant working with Dr. Robert L. Calentine, Bruce discovered the excitement of host–parasite interactions (i.e., the interactions of caryophyllaeid cestodes with their oligochaete intermediate hosts) and, perhaps more importantly, the joy of working with a sincerely dedicated teacher and trusted mentor. In my opinion, those early experiences in Bob Calentine’s laboratory were extremely valuable for Bruce in that they provided a model for his later endeavors as a scientist and mentor for subsequent generations of young parasitologists.

After graduating from the University of Wisconsin–River Falls, Bruce spent 3 yr in the military as a biological scientist at the United States Army Medical Center in Denver, Colorado. Subsequently, Bruce, his lovely and talented wife Linda, and their young son, Brett, moved to Ames, Iowa. At Iowa State University, Bruce worked on his doctorate under the able guidance of Dr. Martin Ulmer and Dr. Wayne Rowley. These 2 highly competent mentors were extremely helpful in directing Bruce’s investigations in both classical and experimental parasitology and medical entomology. His fellow graduate students and other associates at Iowa State, including Darwin Wittrock and Sam Locker, remember Bruce for his insatiable intellectual curiosity, enthusiasm for research, creativity, and aggressive pursuit of knowledge.

After completing his graduate studies at Iowa State University, Bruce accepted a position in the Department of Biology at Murray State University, where he quickly and successfully initiated work on immune responses of mosquitoes against filaroid nematodes. A major turning point in Bruce’s research program came when he accepted a faculty position in the Department of Veterinary Science at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. In this new physical environment, with several parasitologists as colleagues and collaborators and with adequate funding and departmental support, his research program flourished.

At the University of Wisconsin–Madison, Bruce holds the distinguished rank of H. Edwin Young Professor and is the recipient of 2 prestigious University awards for Research Excellence, the Pfizer Award from the School of Veterinary Medicine and the Pound Research Award from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. His service to the University includes a 10-yr period as chairman of the Department of Animal Health and Biomedical Sciences and membership on various committees concerned with research and training in parasitic diseases, international health, biosafety, and animal care. In addition, Bruce served as Director of the University’s Tropical Disease Research Unit.

Bruce was the Recipient of the Burroughs Wellcome Fund Scholar Award in Molecular Parasitology and our Society’s distinguished Henry Baldwin Ward Medal for outstanding research accomplishments. He has served as on council of our Society and as both consulting editor and associate editor for the Journal of Parasitology. He is a member of the Editorial Board for the Experimental Parasitology, and the Journal of Developmental and Comparative Immunology. Bruce is or has been an extremely active member of several national and international agencies concerned with parasitological problems and funding for arthropod-borne domestic and tropical diseases, including the Scientific Advisory Board for the Malaria Foundation in New York, the International Malaria Program in Nairobi, Kenya, the American Institute of Biological Sciences sponsored Review Panel for Malaria Vaccines, the Parasitic Diseases Panel of the United States–Japan Cooperative Medical Sciences Program, and the Tropical Medicine and Parasitology Study Section for The National Institutes of Health. Bruce organized and chaired the very first keystone symposium dealing with the genetic manipulation of insects. At present, he serves as the North American representative to the World Federation of Parasitologists.

Bruce is a dedicated professional who takes great pride in his work, a truly admirable quality that is matched by the sincere interest he takes in the successes of his students. He has served as a mentor for approximately 30 graduate students and has skillfully and successfully directed the studies of 15 postdoctoral associates and 4 visiting scientists. His current international collaborations include work with Culex mosquitoes and lymphatic filariasis with several associates at AIN Shams University in Cairo, Egypt, and with Dr. C. C. Chen at the National Yang Ming University in Taipei, Taiwan, on mosquito genomics and immunity. I know I speak for Bruce in acknowledging the numerous contributions made by former students and col-