

Hudson, Emeson top faculty honorees at fall assembly

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Chancellor Nicholas S. Zeppos (back row, far left) recognized faculty celebrating 25 years of service at the 2015 Fall Faculty Assembly. (Joe Howell/Vanderbilt)

A researcher who is “pushing frontiers and mentoring the next generation” was named the winner of the Earl Sutherland Prize for Achievement in Research at Fall Faculty Assembly. It’s the most prestigious honor Vanderbilt University bestows on a faculty member for research, scholarship or creative expression.

In announcing Billy G. Hudson, the Elliott V. Newman Professor of Medicine and professor of biochemistry, pathology, microbiology and immunology, and cell and developmental biology, as the award recipient Aug. 27 at the Student Life Center, Chancellor Nicholas S. Zeppos said, “To say that Billy’s discoveries are transformational would be an obvious understatement. The impressive body of his work provides us with a rare glimpse into the evolutionary dawn of collagens and tissues in the animal kingdom.

“In addition to discovering and characterizing collagen-IV proteins in which structural alterations cause the pathophysiology of four kidney diseases, he also discovered the novel sulphur-nitrogen bond that stabilizes collagen IV networks. Add to that list his discovery of a drug candidate for prevention of diabetic kidney disease, and a Phase III clinical trial that is underway for this year,” Zeppos said.

Hudson is also co-founder of the Aspirnaut K-10 Pipeline for Diversity, which encourages students from underrepresented and financially challenged groups to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Prizes for the honor are an engraved pewter cup, \$5,000 and an engraved silver bowl the recipient keeps for one year.

Hudson, who was not able to attend the ceremony, was reached for comment later.

“I am greatly honored to receive the prestigious Sutherland Prize,” he said. “I accept the Prize on behalf of the many talented students, fellows, research faculty and Aspirnauts who have worked with me. I am grateful for the collaborative environment and core facilities at Vanderbilt that enable scientific discovery and which provide an exceptionally supportive environment for the training of young scientists.”

Thomas Jefferson Award

Ron Emeson, the Joel G. Hardeman Professor of Pharmacology, professor of molecular physiology and biophysics and psychiatry, won the Thomas Jefferson Award for distinguished service to Vanderbilt through extraordinary contributions as a member of the faculty in the councils and governance of the university.

“Ron serves as a visionary leader in the Vanderbilt Brain Institute and has given selflessly to two key institutional leadership roles in animal research,” Zeppos said.

Emeson has served as chair of the Vanderbilt Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee and director of the Office of Animal Welfare Assurance.

Emeson also has been very active with the Faculty Senate, serving as vice chair and on the Academic Programs and Services Committee, the Faculty Life Committee, the Interdisciplinary Task Force, the Faculty Advisory Council, the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program Executive Committee and the Consultative Committee.

The Thomas Jefferson Award comes with an engraved pewter goblet and \$2,500.

Chancellor’s Awards for Research

Five members of the faculty won Chancellor's Awards for Research, each earning \$1,000 and an engraved pewter julep cup. The awards recognize works of research, scholarship or creative expression presented or published in the preceding three calendar years. The recipients are:

Julia Cohen, associate professor of history and Jewish studies, for two books on Sephardi Studies, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* and *Sephardi Lives: A Documentary History, 1700-1950*.

"These books were not only groundbreaking in nature, they proved to be record-setting as well, with both winning National Jewish Book Awards," Zeppos said.

Lisa Guenther, associate professor of philosophy, for her book *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and its Afterlives*, about solitary confinement in U.S. prisons.

"The book is a highly original study of the practice of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons and the resulting typical effects on prisoners, including anxiety and depression, confusion and memory loss, perceptual distortions and hallucinations, headaches and insomnia," Zeppos said.

Sachin Patel, associate professor of psychiatry and molecular physiology and biophysics, for three articles published in *Cell Reports*, *Neuron* and *Nature Neuroscience* and for his body of work elucidating the role of the brain's endogenous cannabinoid system in anxiety disorders and depression.

"Sachin's work is particularly noteworthy considering that drug development for major mental disorders – including anxiety disorders and depression – has been unsuccessfully searching for novel drug targets for the past generation," Zeppos said.

Joseph Rife, associate professor of classical studies and anthropology, for the monograph *Isthmia IX: The Roman and Byzantine Graves and Human Remains*, which was hailed as a new standard in the publication and presentation of burials and funerary material from the late Roman and Byzantine periods.

"Joseph's work addresses the historical, archaeological and osteological evidence for life and death during the transition from Classical Antiquity to the Byzantine Middle Ages in the Corinthian countryside," Zeppos said.



Julia Cohen (right), with Chancellor Nicholas S. Zeppos and Richard H. Willis, chair of the Faculty Senate, Aug. 27 at Fall Faculty Assembly (Joe Howell/Vanderbilt)

Kevin Stack, professor of law, for his article “Interpreting Regulations” in the *Michigan Law Review*, which provides the first systematic description of how courts approach regulatory interpretation.

“In his convincing argument, Kevin sheds light on why extensive explanatory statements should be used not only as justification for the agency’s choices in crafting the regulation, but also as the primary source for interpreting ambiguity in the regulation’s text,” Zeppos said.

25-year milestones

The chancellor also saluted faculty who have reached the 25-year milestone in their tenure at Vanderbilt.

“A quarter of a century represents a sizeable investment of one’s career, and the contributions made to Vanderbilt during this time span are significant and transformative,” Zeppos said.