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## SIX RESEARCHERS HONORED AT ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**PHILADELPHIA, July 28, 2024** — The Alzheimer's Association® will present six scientific awards at the [Alzheimer's Association International Conference® 2024 \(AAIC®\)](#), recognizing researchers for their varied expertise, noteworthy achievements and innovative contributions to the field of Alzheimer's disease and dementia science.

“The Alzheimer's Association's vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia,” said Maria C. Carrillo, Ph.D., Alzheimer's Association chief science officer and medical affairs lead. “The scientific leaders and innovators we are recognizing at AAIC 2024 have dedicated their lives to accelerating the pace of progress in science, medicine and care. Together, we will make the Association's vision a reality.”

### AAIC Lifetime Achievement Awards

The AAIC Lifetime Achievement Awards are named in honor of Henry Wisniewski, M.D., Ph.D.; Khalid Iqbal, Ph.D.; and Bengt Winblad, M.D., Ph.D., co-founders of the International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease, now known as the Alzheimer's Association International Conference. These awards honor significant contributions to Alzheimer's and dementia research, either through a single scientific discovery or a body of work.

Ralph A. Nixon, M.D., Ph.D., is the recipient of the Khalid Iqbal Lifetime Achievement Award. Nixon is a professor of Psychiatry and Cell Biology at New York University (NYU) Grossman School of Medicine and the director of the Center for Dementia Research at the Nathan S. Kline Institute, New York. Nixon's principal research focuses on the biology of protein clearance by endosomal-lysosomal, autophagy and calpain-calpastatin systems. His team has identified molecular defects in these clearance mechanisms central to pathogenesis of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders and as promising therapeutic targets. Another longstanding research program focuses on the axonal transport, assembly, and turnover of neuronal cytoskeletal proteins and their dysregulation in dementia. Nixon has served on many scientific advisory boards over the years, holds eight issued patents and has authored more than 325 scientific publications.

Ricardo Nitrini, Ph.D., is the recipient of the Henry Wisniewski Lifetime Achievement Award. Nitrini is a senior professor in the department of neurology and head of the Neurological Clinical Division at Hospital das Clínicas da FMUSP (HC-FMUSP). His main area of research is cognitive and behavioral neurology with an emphasis on the study of dementia. He is the founder and co-director of the Cognitive and Behavioral Neurology Group of the Department of Neurology and founder of the Reference Center for Cognitive Disorders at HC-FMUSP. Nitrini is the founder and editor-in-chief of the journal *Dementia & Neuropsychologia*, current president of the Scientific Committee of the Brazilian Academy of Neurology and a member of the editorial board of several scientific journals. He has published 386 articles, organized/edited 39 books and authored 139 book chapters.

Goldie S. Byrd, Ph.D., is the recipient of the Bengt Winblad Lifetime Achievement Award. Byrd is a professor of social sciences and health policy and director of the Maya Angelou Center for Health Equity at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. She conducts research on the genetics of Alzheimer's disease in persons of African descent. A primary focus for her is the inclusion of special populations, particularly African Americans, in Alzheimer's research and clinical trials. At North Carolina A&T State University, Byrd founded the Center for Outreach in Alzheimer's Aging and Community Health to increase awareness of Alzheimer's disease in minoritized communities and to connect these communities to research. She has won numerous awards for her community-engaged research that addresses equity and inclusion in Alzheimer's research. This includes a recent honor as a Most Influential Person of African Descent, for equity research, sponsored by the United Nations.

### **Bill Thies Award**

The Bill Thies Award for Distinguished Service to ISTAART (the [International Society to Advance Alzheimer's Research and Treatment](#)) recognizes an ISTAART member who has provided continued and outstanding service to the ISTAART community. The award honors William (Bill) Thies, Ph.D., who passed away in August 2020. During his tenure from 1998 to 2020 as the Alzheimer's Association's chief medical and scientific officer, and then as senior medical science advisor, Thies was instrumental in bringing AAIC under the Association's management. He launched the peer-reviewed journal [Alzheimer's & Dementia®: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association](#) and the [Alzheimer's Association Research Roundtable](#).

Steven T. DeKosky, M.D., is the recipient of the 2024 Bill Thies Award for Distinguished Service to ISTAART. He is the Aerts-Cosper Professor of Alzheimer's Research at the University of Florida (UF) College of Medicine, professor of neurology and neuroscience at UF, deputy director of the McKnight Brain Institute and senior advisor to the Florida Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC). His basic research has centered on structural and neurochemical changes in human brain aging and dementia and effects of traumatic brain injury. His clinical/translational research is in understanding the cognitive and behavioral decline, genetics, neuroimaging, and treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease. Director of the University of Pittsburgh ADRC for over 25 years, he was the founding chair of ISTAART.

### **Inge-Grundke-Iqbal Award**

Tara Spires-Jones, DPhil, FMedSci, is this year's recipient of the Inge Grundke-Iqbal Award for Alzheimer's Research. This award is presented to the senior author of the most impactful study published in Alzheimer's research during the two calendar years preceding AAIC. Spires-Jones is the personal chair of neurodegeneration and director of the Centre for Discovery Brain Sciences at the University of Edinburgh. Her research focuses on the mechanisms and reversibility of neurodegeneration in Alzheimer's disease, other degenerative brain diseases and aging. Her work has shown that soluble forms of the pathological proteins amyloid beta and tau contribute to synapse and neurodegeneration. Spires-Jones is current president of the British Neuroscience Association, and is founding editor of the translational neuroscience journal *Brain Communications*.

### **Blas Frangione Early Career Achievement Award**

Eduardo Zimmer, Ph.D., is the 2024 recipient of the Blas Frangione Early Career Achievement Award. This award recognizes early career researchers whose cutting edge research in Alzheimer's and dementia has the potential to impact the field by propelling it in novel directions. Zimmer is an assistant professor at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Brazil, an adjunct professor at McGill Centre for Studies in Aging, Canada, and an Associate Researcher at the Brain Institute (Brazil). His research focuses on understanding the cellular origins of Alzheimer's, with a particular interest in neuroimaging, brain energy metabolism, and astrocytes. Zimmer's major findings include demonstrating that the in vivo activation or deactivation of astrocytes in rodents can change the brain FDG-PET signal, an imaging exam used in clinics as a biomarker of neurodegeneration, prompting a reconceptualization of its biological interpretation. He has received multiple individual awards, including the Best Brazilian Ph.D. thesis (2016) and the AAIC Neuroscience Next 'One-to-Watch' Award (2021).

### **About the Alzheimer's Association International Conference® (AAIC®)**

The Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC) is the world's largest gathering of researchers from around the world focused on Alzheimer's and other dementias. As a part of the Alzheimer's Association's research program, AAIC serves as a catalyst for generating new knowledge about dementia and fostering a vital, collegial research community.

AAIC 2024 home page: [www.alz.org/aaic/](http://www.alz.org/aaic/)

AAIC 2024 newsroom: [www.alz.org/aaic/pressroom.asp](http://www.alz.org/aaic/pressroom.asp)

AAIC 2024 hashtag: #AAIC24

### **About the Alzheimer's Association®**

The Alzheimer's Association is a worldwide voluntary health organization dedicated to Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to lead the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia®. Visit [alz.org](http://alz.org) or call 800.272.3900.

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