

## AWARDS

# CBS-KNAW Fungal Biodiversity Centre Awards

The CBS-KNAW Fungal Biodiversity Centre presented its two prestigious awards at the start of the second day of the “One Fungus = Which Name” symposium in Amsterdam on Friday 13 April 2012. The awards are made at irregular intervals by the institute following discussions by its senior staff. This is the third time these awards have been made, and the citations were read, and the presentation of certificates made, by the Centre’s Director, Pedro W. Crous.



### Johanna Westerdijk Award: Michael J. Wingfield

*Awarded on special occasions to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the culture collection of the CBS Fungal Biodiversity Centre, marking a distinguished career in mycology. Nominees for the award will be evaluated on the basis of quality, originality, and quantity of their contributions to the collection, and on the basis of associated mycological research in general.*

“Mike” Wingfield is Professor and Director of the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI), University of Pretoria,

South Africa. The nomination clearly outlines the extraordinary high level of achievement he has attained. His scientific output is truly remarkable, as evidenced by nine books and 585 scientific publications that have attracted more than 7000 citations in the scientific literature; this makes Mike one of the highest cited scientists in his field. He has received numerous awards from societies worldwide, including The Hendrik Christiaan Persoon gold medal, from the Southern African Society for Plant Pathology, Honorary Membership from the Mycological Society of America, Fellowship of the American Phytopathological Society, an A-rated scientist in the National Foundation for Research Development in South Africa, and later this year he is to be awarded an Honorary Doctor of Science degree by the University of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada).

Mike studied at the University of Natal in South Africa, where he majored in botany and plant pathology, did an MSc on tree diseases at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa, and then a PhD on the pine wood nematode at the University of Minnesota in the USA. He is a remarkable mentor, and has supervised over 100 MSc and PhD students. His counsel is not only continuously sought by students but by academics,

foresters, and leading forestry companies worldwide. He has the exceptional ability to motivate others and to bring out the best in everyone. Mike has provided a home for a generation of biologists to study and work in Africa at the cutting edge of science. One of the biggest gifts he ever gave his students, was to teach them how to culture fungi. The remarkable aspect of Mike Wingfield’s cv, is that his papers are backed up by cultures and DNA evidence to test and retest his hypotheses. A further remarkable aspect is that the majority of his designated ex-type strains have over the years been deposited in the CBS collection. So one day, when we have moved on, the students of the future will still be able to retest his hypotheses with the latest techniques available.

Mike’s passion for collecting and culturing fungal biodiversity make him an excellent recipient for the Johanna Westerdijk award. Westerdijk had 56 PhD students in her career, and one of them, Susara Truter, returned to South Africa, and became a professor in plant pathology, and the first female dean in Agriculture. She also taught classes to a young Mike Wingfield. By handing Mike the prestigious Westerdijk award today, the circle is complete.

### Josef Adolf von Arx Award: John W. Taylor

*Awarded on special occasions to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to taxonomic research of fungal biodiversity, marking a distinguished career in mycology. Nominees for the award will be evaluated on the basis of quality, originality, and quantity of their contributions in the field of fungal taxonomy.*

It is no exaggeration to state that John’s name is universally known within our field. His research focuses in two main areas: one concerns barriers to reproduction that are essential to the persistence of species,

and the other is comparative genomics that takes into account variation within species. Furthermore, he is also working to make *Neurospora* a model evolutionary organism to study the timing of deep divergences in fungal evolution and the application of molecular evolution to socially important problems involving fungi. Arguably, some of his biggest contributions include the papers on genealogical concordance species recognition, and the use of the ITS (Internal Transcribed Spacer) region as a gene for species recognition.

Of the peer-reviewed works that John has produced, many have appeared in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (USA), *Science*, and *Nature*, giving him an



H-index above 50. One paper in particular has been outstandingly influential, namely that introducing the ITS primers which became widely used in fungi, and which has received more than 4000 citations.

John has received many awards, including the Rhoda Behnam Medal for Research from the Medical Mycological Association of the Americas, the Lucille Georg Medal

for Research from the International Society for Human and Animal Mycology, and the Alexopoulos Award for Research from the Mycological Society of America. He is a fellow of the Mycological Society of America, the American Academy of Microbiology, and the California Academy of Sciences. John is also the current President of the International Mycological Association, and a

former President of the Mycological Society of America.

We are extremely proud today to be able to honour John with the Josef von Arx award. I think that, similar to von Arx, John is also seen as a trailblazer in fungal taxonomic research.

## IMA Young Mycologist Awards 2011

The recipients of the IMA Young Mycologist Awards for 2011 for Africa, Asia, Australasia, and North America were announced in *IMA Fungus* 2 (2): (52)–(53), 2011. At that time, the IMA regional mycological member organizations for Europe and Latin America had not finalized their selections, so they are announced here. The recipients will receive their awards, which include a cheque for 500 €, at IMC10 in Thailand in 2014.



### Elias Magnus Fries Medal

Cecile Gueidan is unusual in that her broad mycological interests started in fieldwork with one of Europe's most experienced lichenologists, Claude Roux. She went on to learn molecular phylogenetic methods at Duke University (NC, USA) and tackled some of the most difficult pyrenocarpous lichens that grow on rocks in terrestrial as well as marine and freshwater habitats. Her studies demonstrated enormous polyphyly and convergence in some thallus characters in the verrucarioid lichens (especially those with simple spores), and by combining her molecular work with careful observations of ascomatal features, she laid the foundations for a modern taxonomy of this huge group of lichenized fungi.

During a post-doctoral period at CBS, Cecile applied her talents to other groups of non-lichenized fungi, including the fascinating rock-inhabiting taxa, some lichenicolous species, and also certain moulds. This led her to become interested in and to make contributions to the discussion of the overall system for ascomycete classification, and the origins of rock-inhabiting fungi.

It is also of note that Cecile co-operates with a wide range of lichenologists and other mycologists, and as Elias Magnus Fries worked and published on lichen-fungi as well as other fungi, this makes her a particularly fitting recipient of this award.

Cecile is now employed as a research scientist in the Department of Life Sciences of the Natural History Museum in London, where she continues her research on the molecular systematics of verrucarioid lichen-forming and also other ascomycetes.

### Carlos Luis Spegazzini Medal

Luis Fernando Gusmao has been a very productive mycologist since he obtained his PhD at the Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil, in 2004. This concerned the micro-fungi on decaying leaves of native plants. He has already published 50 papers, most in peer reviewed journals. His main research has continued to be on the taxonomy of mitospore fungi from Brazil, contributing to the knowledge of this important and little-known group in South America and also worldwide. He has coordinated the research activities of several laboratories, and has conducted several research projects himself.

Luis is now at the Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana (Feira de Santa, Bahia



State, Brazil) where, in addition to his own research, he has become very committed to the training of both undergraduate and graduate students interested in mycology. Indeed, to date he has been the advisor of 14 undergraduate and graduate Brazilian students.

Luis has also participated in national and international congresses, workshops, and other activities, at which he has given talks related to his research activities.

The Committee considered that he has all the attributes to making him a deserving recipient of the Spegazzini Medal: dedication, enthusiasm, national and international visibility, and a strong commitment to the study of mycology in Latin America.

## Anton de Bary Medaille: Walter Gams



Walter Gams is to be honoured with the Anton de Bary Medaille of the Deutschen Phytomedizinischen Gesellschaft (DPG) at a ceremony in Braunschweig on 11 September 2012. The award is named after Anton Heinrich de Bary (1831–1888) who had enormous influence on mycology in the mid- to late nineteenth century. The medal

was initiated in 1989, and is now generally awarded in alternate years to persons who have made outstanding contributions to mycology and phytopathology. Walter, for many years a mycologist at the KNAW-CBS Fungal Biodiversity Centre in Baarn and later Utrecht, developed an international reputation for his thorough systematic

revisionary work on critical and difficult groups of hyphomycetes, especially in the genera *Acremonium*, *Fusarium*, *Trichoderma* and *Verticillium*, but further on soil fungi and hyphomycetes in general. His books include *Cephalosporium-Artige Schimmelpilze* (1971), *CBS Course of Mycology* (1975, 1980, 1983, 1998; with various other CBS staff), *Compendium of Soil Fungi* (1980, 2007; with K. H. Domsch and T.-H. Anderson), and most recently the stupendous *Genera of Hyphomycetes* (2011; with K. Seifert, G. Morgan-Jones and W. B. Kendrick). He collaborates with and assists mycologists world-wide, and played a major role in training courses and supervising students and visiting researchers at CBS, and also at the University of Aachen. For many years he served as Secretary of what is now the Nomenclature Committee for Fungi (NCF), and willingly shares his deep knowledge of the intricacies of fungal nomenclature.

## Queen's Award for Forestry: Jolanda Roux meets the Queen of England



Jolanda Roux of the University of Pretoria's Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI), as the recipient of the Queen's Award for Forestry of the Commonwealth Forestry Association (CFA), was invited to Buckingham Palace and able to spend ten minutes in private conversation with Her Royal Highness Queen Eliza-

beth II on 13 December 2011. The Queen has been a patron of the CFA since 1987, and this award aims to recognise outstanding international contributions to forestry and recognizes the achievements of outstanding mid-career foresters, based on a combination of exceptional contributions to forestry and an innovative approach to his or her work. Since its inception, the award has been made only nine times and Jolanda is the first woman to receive this honour. She was accompanied to the Palace by Jim Ball, the current Chair of the CFA.

Jolanda is a forest pathologist and mycologist and one of the team of academics that lead FABI and also has an appointment in the Departments of Microbiology and Plant Pathology at the University of Pretoria. Her research focuses on tree diseases, and she is particularly passionate about tree health in general and fungi that cause diseases of trees on the African continent. She collaborates with researchers on many other parts of the world and has travelled widely to undertake her research. She has already published close to 100 papers in international respected journals

and has supervised numerous post-graduate students at the University of Pretoria. In addition to the Queen's Award, she has received many other forms of recognition for her work, notably in 2011, the "Distinguished Young Women in Science" award of the South African Department of Science and Technology.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Vernon Ahmadjian (1930–2012)

Vernon Ahmadjian, pioneer in the culture of the fungal and algal partners of lichens, and explorer of the lichen symbiosis, died on 13 March 2012. The son of Armenian immigrants, Vernon graduated from Clark University, Worcester (MA, USA) in 1952, and received a PhD from Harvard University in 1960 where he worked with the lichenologist Ivan Mackenzie Lamb (1911–1990). For almost all his life he was based at Clark University where he experimented with the culture of the isolated components from lichens, and strove to resynthesize lichen thalli and understand the nature of the lichen symbiosis. His early work is drawn together in *The Lichen Symbiosis* (1967). His scanning electron micrograph of an algal cell being clasped by a fungal hypha featured in *Nature* in 1981 captivated

numerous biologists. He took a particular interest in the taxonomy of the green trebouxoid algae, and in collaboration with Chicita F. and William L. Culberson showed that “lichen products” much used in chemotaxonomy were manufactured by the fungal partner alone. He extended his interests to symbiotic systems in general, producing an influential textbook on the subject with Surindar Paracer (*Symbiosis: an introduction to biological associations*, 1986). He was the first editor of the International Association for Lichenology’s Newsletter, and was awarded the Association’s Acharius Medal in 1986. He presented his personal lichen collections with supporting literature and documents to the Farlow Herbarium in Cambridge (MA) in 2007. Lichen biology has lost one of its foremost and much respected pioneers.

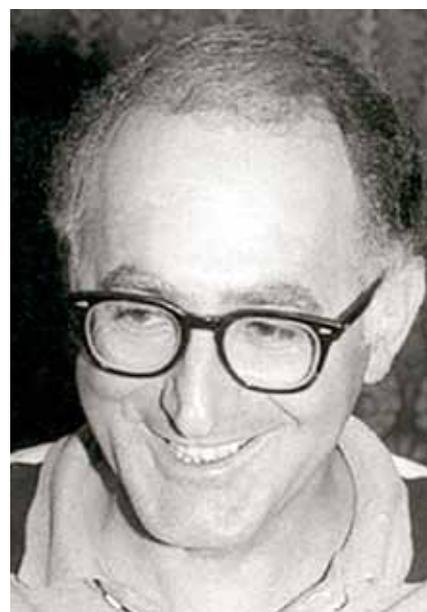
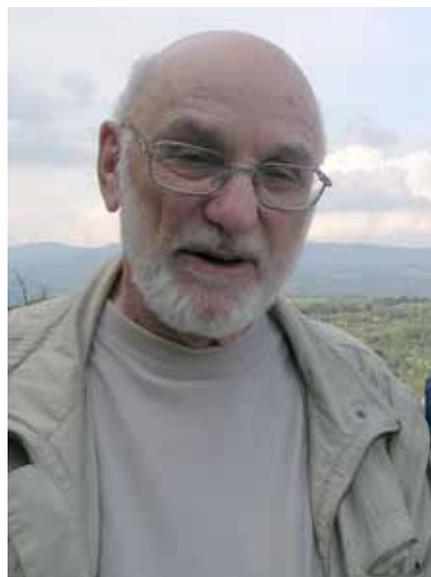


Photo Hannes Hertel

### Ovidiu Constantinescu (1933–2012)



On 23 January 2012 our dear friend Ovidiu Constantinescu passed away at the age of 79. He was a passionate mycologist already in his Romanian years, specializing in fungi growing on plant leaves. In spite of the difficult situation under the communist regime in Romania, he managed to acquire the relevant literature in exchange for herbarium specimens, and his papers were always perfectly documented. He was always keen to improve standards in mycology, and to that end published a book *Metode si Technici in Micologie* (1974), which sadly was not translated into English. In a second effort he succeeded to leave his country and came to The Netherlands, moving from there to Sweden in 1982. Using his technical skills, he built up a culture collection, Mycoteket,

in Uppsala. His most prominent expertise was the taxonomy of biotrophic *Peronosporaceae*, about which he published several relevant papers, including a compilation of names in *Peronospora* (1991). More recently he collaborated with Jamshid Fatehi and others, in order to undertake molecular work with his favourite group of fungi.

Developed from a draft provided by Walter Gams.

### Walter Friederich Otto Marasas (1941–2012)

It is with great sadness that we must share the news of the passing of our dear friend and colleague Walter (“Wally”) Marasas on 6 June 2012. Wally, famous for his ground-breaking research on mycotoxins, especially those associated with *Fusarium* species, had friends and admirers in many parts of the world. He was a larger than life

character who inspired people around him, and he will be deeply missed by his many friends and colleagues. Wally’s passion for biology, and mycology in particular, was infectious and he shared his experience and skills with great numbers of people. He mentored students (ourselves included) and encouraged many to pursue their mycologi-

cal dreams. Those who knew Wally only as a mycologist/mycotoxicologist probably did not know that he was an accomplished botanist with a deep love for the flora of South Africa, spending long hours with his wife Rika identifying and photographing flowering plants. He was also an avid philatelist, and post his formal retirement

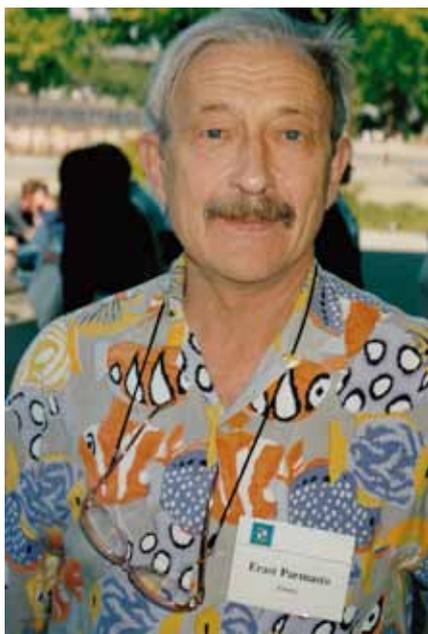
five years ago, he worked furiously to complete a book illustrating most of the world's fungal stamps – which he classified taxonomically. During an illustrious career, Wally published in excess of 300 scientific papers, numerous books, and was amongst the worlds' most highly cited mycologists. He was a founder member (fellow and honorary member) of the Southern African Society for Plant Pathology, Fellow of the American Phytopathological Society, Fellow of the South African Veterinary Association, and Foreign Associate member of the US National Academy of Science. He was the recipient of many international awards, and held honorary doctorates from the University of the Free State and the University of Pretoria. Wally's death leaves a great void, perhaps most so in the tremendous support, guidance and mentorship that he provided

to friends and colleagues, both young and old. He had a special knack of being able to focus on the real issues and to provide wise council. Many mycologists will know that he held very strong views regarding mycological issues and principles and he was not shy to share these openly. This firm commitment to what he believed to be “good practice” and the courage to express his feelings is what many of us relied on most. His loss will be felt for many years to come. Wally is survived by his wife Henrika (Rika) Marasas and two children Carissa and Walter jr and two grandsons. He was not only a wonderful friend to many, but also a loving family man, and a great biologist that will be fondly remembered by all who knew him.

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## Erast Parmasto (1928–2012)



Erast Parmasto at IMCV in 1994. Photo Karen Nakasone.

A leading and much respected expert in the taxonomy, nomenclature, and phylogeny of fungi, Erast died on 24 April 2012 at the age of 83. He graduated from Tartu State University in 1952, and studied at the Institute of Biology of the Estonian Academy of Sci-

ences in Tartu, supervised by the renowned polypore specialist Apollinari Bondarzew, gaining a PhD in 1955 and a DSc in 1969. He was based from 1950 until his death at the Institute of Biology of the Estonian Academy of Sciences (now part of the Institute of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences of the Estonian University of Life Sciences) with roles from senior gardener to director – and after retirement as a senior researcher.

From 1951–1977 he also taught part-time at the Department of Botany, University of Tartu, on mycology, methodology of science, cladistics, cladistic biogeography, computer applications, and principles of biosystematics. He was awarded the title of Emeritus Professor of Mycology in 1980, and later worked as a part-time professor in the department from 1987–1995.

His main research interest was in the corticioid fungi, especially *Hymenochaetales*, on which he published extensively with particular care being paid to nomenclature. In total, he published more than 400 scientific or popular scientific studies, and described more than 200 new taxa. He was an early devotee of e-mail, and initiated and for many years ran Mycologists Online, which compiled the electronic addresses of mycologists world-wide. He was always

passionate about new approaches, and he was one of the first mycologists to embrace cladistics. He jumped also at the potential of databases, initiating Cortbase, a continuing nomenclator of the corticioid fungi which swelled to over 8000 species names. But he was also philosophical on issues such as generic and species concepts, on which he edited a book (*Problems of Species and Genus in Fungi*, 1986).

In addition to his scientific work, Erast was one of the academician-secretaries of the Estonian Academy of Sciences in 1973–1981, established the series *Scripta Mycologica* in 1970, and served as editor of *Eesti Loodus* (Estonian Nature) in 1957–1960. He organized the Tenth Congress of European Mycologists (CEMX) in Tallin in 1989, and was a major contributor to nomenclatural discussions at congresses, and also for many years an astute and much-valued member of what is now the Nomenclature Committee for Fungi (NCF). His bright eyes, wry smile, and sharp intellect will be missed by all mycologists who came to know him, not least his many close colleagues in Estonia.

Urmas Kõljalg kindly provided key biographical information on Erast's career.