Morris J. Karnovsky, M.B. BCh. DSc
Harvard University Medical School

Nominator's Remarks:

Professor Emeritus Morris J. Karnovsky of Harvard Medical School has won the 2002 Chugai Award for Meritorious Mentoring and Scholarship. ASIP's newest award will have plenty of company in Dr. Karnovsky's trophy room, alongside the 1981 Rous-Whipple Award and the 1994 Gold-Headed Cane. Among Dr. Karnovsky's other awards are the 75th Jubilee Medical Award from the University of the Witwatersrand in his home country, South Africa, and the first Earl P. Benditt Research Career Award in 1999.

Dr. Karnovsky's 45-year career at Harvard includes two 2-year stints as acting-Chairman of the Department of Pathology and 14 years as chair of the Program in Cell and Developmental Biology.

Nominating Dr. Karnovsky for the Chugai Award, Patricia A. D'Amore, Ph.D., Senior Scientist and Professor of Ophthalmology (Pathology) at The Schepens Eye Research Institute in Boston, calls Dr. Karnovsky "knowledgeable, innovative and talented" and "a giant in the field of experimental pathology, and a pioneer in the field of cell biology." Dr. D'Amore lists among Dr. Karnovsky's most significant research accomplishments the introduction of the HRP (horseradish peroxidase) technique of tracing the endocytotic uptake of HRP from the glomerular infiltrate into cells of the proximal tubules, and development of one of the first animal models for studying graft vasculopathy. In addition, Dr Karnovsky conducted a variety of studies of in vitro and in vivo systems to determine how heparin and endogenous heparan sulfate exert antiproliferative activity. One of Dr. Karnovsky's most important findings is the formaldehyde-glutaraldehyde fixative known as "Karnovsky's fixative" which revolutionized immunohistopathology.

In addition, and particularly relevant for the Chugai Award, Dr. Karnovsky has mentored more than 50 scientists who are today prominent in many fields across the country and around the world. One of them, who began with Dr. Karnovsky in 1978, is Dr. John Castellot, Professor of Anatomy and Cell Biology at Tufts University School of Medicine. He writes, "I can think of no other experimental pathologist who has enriched the field with so many seminal scientific contributions and accomplished trainees...To this day I am still influenced strongly by his creative, rigorous and analytical approach to analyzing complex phenomena."

Another Karnovsky trainee, Dr. Elazer R. Edelman, Professor and Director of the Harvard-MIT Biomedical Engineering Center writes, "Outside of my relationship with my parents, no experience I have had has been as influential and nurturing, and at times as intense, as the relationship I have with Morris. To this day he serves as my teacher in the truest sense of the word...There is no greater mentor than he." Dr. Edelman adds, "Those who have left Morris's laboratory have not left his spell. We all still seek Morris out like students did with Plato and Socrates, for he teaches with the purest joy, an intellectual curiosity that is infectious and a love that only comes from a father-teacher." Dr. Edelman recalls lunchtime walks with Dr. Karnovsky and still prizes the personal art work his mentor gave him, as he did to all his post-doctoral trainees.

The Chugai Award began in 2000. It was created by the Chugai Pharmaceutical Company to honor a member of ASIP for a distinguished career in experimental and investigative pathology, demonstrated through excellence in mentoring, and sustained productivity in research. Dr. Karnovsky will receive a cash award and a plaque, and will present the keynote lecture and chair the Chugai Symposium for Young Investigators at the 2002 ASIP meeting.