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Investigating the Mechanisms of Disease
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Ashley G. Rivenbark, PhD, Receives the 2010 ASIP Excellence in Science Award



Dr. Ashley Rivenbark has been selected as the recipient of the 2010 ASIP Excellence in Science Award, which recognizes outstanding achievement at the earliest stages of a career in biomedical research. Accomplishments include, but are not limited to, publications and presentations as well as volunteered service to the ASIP or other professional societies, institutional committees, and the pathology community. This award is funded through the generous support of the A.D. Sobel-ASIP Education Fund.

Ashley Rivenbark is a Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics at University of North Carolina School of Medicine. She has a PhD in Toxicology from University of North Carolina School of Medicine. Currently under the direction of Dr. Brian D. Strahl, she is examining the role of histone

H3 lysine 36 methylation and demethylation in transcriptional regulation using budding yeast as a model system. Since histone H3 lysine 36 is associated with cancer development, Dr. Rivenbark is going to apply what she has learned in yeast to human cells in order to gain a better understanding of cancer pathogenesis. Dr. Rivenbark's research also includes examining histone methylation patterns in breast tumors, elucidating the modification profile of these tumors in order to help determine if histone modifications are clinically relevant for patient assessment of breast cancer.

Dr. William B. Coleman of University of North Carolina School of Medicine believes that Dr. Rivenbark "is an accomplished young investigator based upon her publications in the primary literature, has contributed other scholarly works (reviews and book chapters) in the area of her research, has delivered numerous well-received presentations at national meetings, has significantly contributed to the American Society for Investigative Pathology through service to the Program Committee, and continues to make meaningful contributions to various programs on the campus of the University of North Carolina." As Dr. Coleman states, Dr. Rivenbark truly represents the future of the ASIP and she will increase her involvement and impact on the Society as her career continues.

According to Dr. Satdarshan (Paul) Singh Monga of University of Pittsburgh, "Dr. Rivenbark has presented excellent research communications...in the field of epigenetic regulation of cancer. These oral and poster presentations have been high impact, timely and very well-received and applauded." He describes her as "a truly remarkable young scientist with an excellent record of productivity and accomplishment during her short career to date and really typifies all of the positive attributes that we associate with successful young investigators in research."

Dr. Mark Sobel, ASIP's Executive Officer, especially noted that Dr. Rivenbark "is one of a select number of ASIP trainees who have not only succeeded in performing state-of-the-art research in pathogenesis, but have also contributed their time and effort to advance the community of experimental pathologists. When the ASIP Excellence in Science Award was first established in 2008, it was designed to recognize

young investigators who have excelled in both research and (pathology) community service. Dr. Rivenbark is an outstanding individual who represents the future of our experimental pathology community."

Dr. Rivenbark presented her award lecture on "Cancer Epigenetics: Lessons from Yeast and Humans" on Saturday, April 24, 2010 during the session "Highlights: Graduate Student Research in Pathology" at the ASIP Annual Meeting in Anaheim, CA and received the Excellence in Science Award on Monday, April 26, 2010.