



Dear Friends,

Standing on this side of McLean's 200-year history, it is wonderful to realize that generations of doctors, scientists and philanthropists have shaped McLean into one of the most dynamic, leading-edge medical institutions in the world. In this issue, you'll read about how today's leaders at McLean are continuing that tradition. One exciting example is Dr. Ole Isacson's investigations into the causes and treatments for Parkinson's disease and the donors who support him. You'll also learn about our world-renowned 3East program for young people with emerging borderline personality disorder and three remarkable gifts that are making this specialized care available to more young women and their families. Finally, we are pleased to announce an initiative—funded by an anonymous gift—that places the mental health needs of women on a new platform for delivering compassionate, specialized psychiatric care.

And speaking of change vs. permanence, we have revamped the look of Horizons, while maintaining what we hope is the same interesting content.

Sincerely,

Catharine Cook

Catharine Cook
Senior Vice President and
Chief Development Officer

Neuroregeneration Institute Intensifies Quest for New Parkinson's Treatments



Ole Isacson, MD

Susan Hansen recalls a meeting not too long ago with world-renowned Parkinson's disease researcher Ole Isacson, MD. Hansen, a donor to Isacson's research program, was visiting his laboratory for an update on the investigator's progress.

"Ole was talking about stem cell research," said Hansen, whose husband, Poul, has lived with Parkinson's for 15 years. "He was very animated and began illustrating with different colors, drawing lines on the white board. It was very complicated, but it all made eminent sense."

Hansen, like other supporters, said Isacson has a gift for translating

extremely complex information into terms understandable to a lay person. That—and the scientific promise of his work—are what have attracted a loyal group of donors to Isacson, director of McLean's Neuroregeneration Institute.

"He has a way of connecting everything he does to the patient," said Robin Ross, PhD, whose family foundation, Consolidated Anti-Aging Foundation, has been a longstanding supporter of Isacson's research. "No matter what specific area of Parkinson's research he is focusing on, it is always applicable to prevention and treatment."

At the moment, Isacson's prodigious research program is taking him and his collaborators in several promising directions. One area of investigation

"Dr. Isacson passionately shares his discoveries with us so that we, too, can feel part of his successes. He and McLean have made us feel so welcomed and appreciated. Ours has become a personal relationship based on a shared goal."

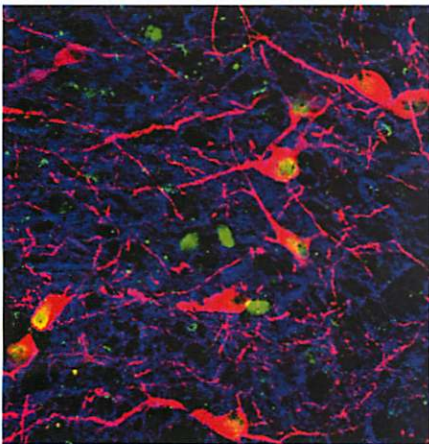
Donor Ronna Cooper,
whose late husband, Harold, suffered from Parkinson's disease

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Neuroregeneration Institute *Continued from page 2*

looks at the way certain neurons naturally protect themselves from Parkinson's disease, opening up possibilities for augmenting these defenses in more vulnerable neurons to prevent cell death. And because Parkinson's affects cells throughout the body, Isacson's work goes beyond the brain. "There are debilitating symptoms that we are now working on, including gastrointestinal malfunction," he said. "Our work looks at the disease from a holistic perspective."

One of this team's most exciting research endeavors involves transforming the skin cells of Parkinson's patients into cells called induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells, which can then be coaxed into becoming replacement neurons for those damaged or destroyed by the disease. Because iPS cells are created from patients themselves, they can be used to develop individualized therapies without risk of immune rejection. "The Neuroregeneration Institute is leading a revolution where we look at cell biology as the source of knowledge



The cells appearing in red show new growth and connections occurring among transplanted dopamine neurons.

"I am impressed with Dr. Isacson's approach to Parkinson's disease, with its emphasis on regenerative therapy—repairing the diseased neurons. Contrast that to the current treatment of replacing the dopamine that neurons are no longer producing, which addresses the symptoms, but not the course of the underlying disease."

Donor Bernard Yudowitz, MD, JD,
*founder of Wild Acre Inns, which provides
community residential mental health treatment programs*

for developing therapies to repair or re-grow neurons," said Isacson. "Classically, we depended solely on neurochemistry or pharmacology to develop new treatments, but no longer."

Isacson has spent his career forging research collaborations with investigators from around the country and world, and the institute will enable him to continue growing these joint ventures, including ones that cross into other disciplines, such as psychiatry, imaging and gerontology. His team also interacts with patient groups and governmental agencies as well as the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries. With a research focus on repairing or replacing damaged cells, the institute will also benefit patients with other diseases where brain connections have gone awry, including Alzheimer's disease, Huntington's disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease) and schizophrenia.

Isacson's collaborative spirit is one of the things that has made the Orchard Foundation a perennial supporter, according to Brigitte Kingsbury, executive director of the foundation her family created. "He has colleagues all over the world," said Kingsbury, whose brother, Carl Lehner, has Parkinson's disease. "We

love the idea that he works with people from throughout Europe and Canada. They coordinate and learn from each other, which is so important, especially at times when restrictions in the U.S. on stem cell research can inhibit progress."

Cheryl Ross, sister to Robin and trustee of the Consolidated Anti-Aging Foundation, believes such collaboration not only sets the Neuroregeneration Institute apart, it also is essential to advancing the science. "We view Dr. Isacson's collaboration with other researchers as crucial to accelerating progress."

For Isacson, the importance of donor support goes far beyond the financial: "They are the inspiration for what we do. They are real partners," he said. "Their longstanding relationships with my lab and their understanding of the research process have been of tremendous value."

Hansen may not *herself* be able to explain the concepts Isacson was trying to convey in his complicated diagram, but she is confident that his work will some day yield huge dividends for patients like her husband. "Poul and I firmly believe that Ole and his team will be the ones to find the answers and the means to successfully treat Parkinson's disease with stem cells," she said. ♥