

Longer Life Foundation:
An RGA/Washington University Partnership



The Longer Life Foundation (LLF) celebrated its 10th Anniversary on November 20, 2008 with a series of events at Washington University School of Medicine in Saint Louis, Missouri. In the morning, Nir Barzilai MD, the Ingeborg and Ira Lee Rennert Chair of Aging Research at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, gave the LLF Visiting Professor Lecture at Internal Medicine Grand Rounds in Clopton Amphitheater at Barnes-Jewish Hospital. Dr. Barzilai presented an overview of research on aging, then described his genetic studies of a cohort of centenarians and their children.

The Foundation's Advisory Group's semi-annual meeting was held from noon to 3:00 p.m. During the meeting, Dr. Barzilai provided a synopsis of his morning presentation and a video of the Nova *Science Now* television program featuring his genetic research. Larry Shapiro MD, Dean of the School of Medicine and a member of the Foundation's Board of Governors, presented the 10th Anniversary Report, profiling the 46 research grants funded by the Foundation between 1998 and 2008. Kenneth Polonsky MD, Chairman of the Department of Medicine, spoke to the Advisory Group about the new Longevity Research Program established in May 2008 under matching grants from the Foundation and the Department of Medicine. Led by John Holloszy MD and Luigi Fontana MD, PhD, the program supports a range of research that is focused on factors involved in aging.

A Wine and Cheese Poster Session from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. completed the day's events. Thirty-four posters were presented by researchers who had received LLF funding and other investigators conducting studies in areas of interest to the Foundation, such as the natural history of disease or novel ways to improve prognosis. Phil Smalley MD, Managing Director of the Foundation, welcomed attendees and reviewed the history of the Foundation. "In 1998, Greig Woodring, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Reinsurance Group of America (RGA), and William Peck MD, then-Vice Chancellor of Medical Affairs and Dean of Washington University School of Medicine, established the Longer Life Foundation as a partnership between Washington University and RGA" said Dr. Smalley. "The Foundation's mission is to fund studies to help the public live longer- and better-quality lives and to find better ways to prognosticate disease. This benefits both the insurance industry and public health. Many of the studies we have funded have helped researchers procure major grants, including from the National Institutes of Health, allowing more research to be done that follows our mission." The Poster Session was well-attended and provided an opportunity for the scientific and insurance communities to meet and discuss aging research.