American Society for Microbiology

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

American Society for Microbiology Honors Edward F. DeLong

Washington, DC—February 9, 2009—The 2009 American Society for Microbiology (ASM) D.C. White Research and Mentoring Award is being presented to Edward F. DeLong, Ph.D., professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Division of Biological Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This award honors the late David C. White, who was known for his interdisciplinary scientific approach and for being a dedicated and inspiring mentor. Dr. DeLong, a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology, is known as being one of the first marine microbiologists to apply novel molecular genetic methods to address fundamental ecological questions.

Dr. DeLong received his Ph.D. from Scripps Institute of Oceanography and completed postdoctoral training at Indiana University, Bloomington, where he did some of the first molecular studies of marine picoplankton. Dr. DeLong developed the first of the rRNA-based fluorescent hybridization probes, "phylogenetic stains," which identify by microscopy single cells phylogenetically. His work opened a new window for the identification and characterization of bacteria in nature.

Dr. DeLong subsequently worked on the use of 16s RNA gene cloning and sequencing as a way of analyzing complex microbial communities in nature. He discovered marine archaea, planktonic and symbiotic. This work completely changed our image of the role of archaea in the biosphere. Using culture-independent molecular techniques, Dr. DeLong showed that archaea are very widespread and abundant in the world oceans. Another significant contribution has been Dr. DeLong's identification of anaerobic methane oxidizing bacteria. This work is showing that individual groups of microbes are metabolically versatile but in teams they can do almost anything that is thermodynamically possible.

The D.C. White Research and Mentoring Award will be presented during the 109th General Meeting of the ASM, May 17-21, 2009 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. ASM is the world's oldest and largest life science organization and has more than 43,000 members worldwide. ASM's mission is to advance the microbiological sciences and promote the use of scientific knowledge for improved health and economic and environmental well-being.

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