

Media Release

Basel, Switzerland, December 04, 2017

**Lectures, parties, and Nobel Prizes: living and researching at the Basel Institute for Immunology**

**Karger Publishers has just released the book [History of the Basel Institute for Immunology](#). It documents over 30 years of research and everyday life. The author expands the print version into a large digital database containing additional information like videos, photos or personal notes.**

Combining scientific knowledge with stories of everyday life, the book [History of the Basel Institute for Immunology](#) provides a unique look back at the history of an important research institution in Basel, Switzerland. Founded in 1969 by the scientist Niels K. Jerne and financed by Hoffmann-La Roche the institute was well known in the Basel area and worldwide until its shutdown in 2002. In total over 500 scientists worked and were trained at the institute during the over 30 years of its existence. Institute scientists were awarded 27 important international awards in immunology, including 3 Nobel Prizes for Georges J.F. Köhler, Niels K. Jerne, and Susumu Tonegawa. Professor Ivan Lefkovits, the author of the book and a former “permanent member” of the institute, has chronicled not only the scientific milestones but also the social life and society around the institution. Lean management, great freedom of decision-making for researchers, and a high turnover of young scientists due to short-term contracts created an innovative working environment.

“I was fascinated by how it took just a few components, a good idea, an outstanding scientist, financial support and the right environment to create something this great. This story needed to be told and I was happy to do so,” says Lefkovits. “The aim of this book is to describe a scientist’s life, work success and failures – all that is needed to provide a comprehensive picture of modern science.” The publication is dedicated to researchers interested in scientific development as well as to readers interested in the history of a scientific institute in Basel.

The [History of the Basel Institute for Immunology](#) is more than a simple history book. Hundreds of QR codes in the margins expand the print pages into an online database. By following the QR codes, the reader discovers a lot of additional details like photos of former employees, speakers’ lists of symposia held, or the full letter announcing one of the Nobel Prizes. “Nowadays simple citations are not enough to capture the history of an entire institution. With the QR codes we have the opportunity to display more sources and information,” explains Lefkovits. And the database is still growing. Family and friends of the Basel Institute for Immunology are invited to upload their own material and share their memories. The book was created with the help and support of the Roche archive, especially in regard to pictures and videos.

Please note that the QR codes will most likely be working with the newest smartphones or QR code reading apps.

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**Further information:**

Book website with free chapter excerpts: [www.karger.com/Book/Home/276903](http://www.karger.com/Book/Home/276903)

Book website **The Immune System – The Present Festschrift in Honor of Niels Kaj Jerne, on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday**: [www.karger.com/Book/Home/220155](http://www.karger.com/Book/Home/220155)

To request a review copy or cover image please contact Sophie Saberi: [s.saberi@karger.com](mailto:s.saberi@karger.com).

**About the Author**

Ivan Lefkovits was a researcher at the Paul Ehrlich Institute in Frankfurt when Niels K. Jerne was its director. In 1969 Jerne asked Lefkovits to join him at the newly founded Institute for Immunology in Basel. He worked at the Basel Institute for Immunology from 1969 to 2002. After having left the institute, he led the proteomics group at the University Hospital Basel amongst others.



**About Karger Publishers**

Karger Publishers in Basel, Switzerland, is a globally active medical and scientific publishing company. Independent and family-run in the fourth generation by Vice Chairwoman & Publisher Gabriella Karger and Chairman Thomas Karger, the company is dedicated to serving the information needs of the scientific community with publications of high-quality content, covering all fields of medical science. The publication program comprises 50 new books per year and 108 peer-reviewed journals with a growing number of open access publications. Karger content is published predominantly in English, with a strong focus on basic and clinical research, and is generally available online. S. Karger AG consists of the publishing company Karger Publishers (est. 1890) and the International Subscription Agency Karger Libri (est. 1960).

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