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Kevin Foskett Brings a Strong Translational Perspective to Monell's Board of Directors

PHILADELPHIA (August 1, 2019) – Monell is pleased to welcome Kevin Foskett, PhD, to the Center's Board of Directors.

Foskett, the Isaac Ott Professor of Physiology at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine, first became involved with Monell about 10 years ago. That was when he discovered a new family of ion channel proteins, which he soon realized were expressed in taste bud cells. Foskett reached out to Monell taste experts Michael Tordoff, PhD, and Ichiro Matsumoto, PhD, who together determined that these CALHM ion channels were necessary to perceive sweet, bitter, and umami (savory) tastes. Their collaboration continues to this day.

"I am honored to join the Center's Board of Directors in the hope that I might contribute to its continued success," says Foskett. "Monell has been an important resource for me for years, and my research has greatly benefited from working with Monell scientists. It's my privilege to contribute to the Center's continued excellence."

After receiving his doctorate in Zoology and Physiology from the University of California, Berkeley, Foskett found himself drawn to biomedical research. For the past 30 years, his lab has focused on the mechanisms and regulation of ion transport and signal transduction, particularly in epithelial cells. Foskett's work has fueled studies of the molecular mechanisms of genetically-inherited forms of Alzheimer's disease; cellular bioenergetics, with relevance for neurodegenerative diseases and cancer; and the molecular physiology of taste perception.

"My career offers many examples of the value of asking basic research questions, the type that Monell has been answering for 50 years," Foskett said. "I'm in a unique position to appreciate the importance of the fundamental knowledge coming out of the Center, and to help advise Monell's leadership moving forward."

Foskett has been the Chair of the Department of Physiology in the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine for the past six years, and was its Vice-Chair for several years before that. He has a joint appointment in the Department of Cellular and



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Developmental Biology, and is a member of both the Mahoney Institute of Neurosciences and the Abramson Cancer Center.

“Kevin brings a strong academic perspective to the Board,” said Monell Center Board Chair David Macnair, PhD. “His experience in academia and his past administrative leadership roles will greatly benefit the growth and evolution of Monell.”

Foskett sees tremendous value in strengthening Monell’s ties with other institutions. Through improved access to sophisticated resources, the Center will be better able to pursue cutting-edge research.

“Through strong collaborations, both within Monell and with researchers around the world, I am confident the Center will continue discovering answers to increasingly complex questions,” said Foskett. “I’m excited about this new step in my relationship with Monell.”

The Monell Chemical Senses Center is an independent nonprofit basic research institute based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Monell advances scientific understanding of the mechanisms and functions of taste and smell to benefit human health and well-being. Using an interdisciplinary approach, scientists collaborate in the programmatic areas of sensation and perception; neuroscience and molecular biology; environmental and occupational health; nutrition and appetite; health and well-being; development, aging and regeneration; and chemical ecology and communication. For more information about Monell, visit www.monell.org.