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Robert Margolskee Appointed Associate Director of Monell Center

PHILADELPHIA (November 10, 2010) -- Robert F. Margolskee, M.D., Ph.D., a world-renowned expert on the molecular mechanisms of taste, has been named Associate Director of the Monell Center, effective immediately.

“Bob Margolskee is an internationally-respected researcher with an exceptional ability to think clearly while integrating diverse areas of study. These traits make him a natural for a leadership position at Monell, which is predicated on the concept of interdisciplinary collaboration,” said Monell Director Gary K. Beauchamp, Ph.D.

Margolskee succeeds Joseph Brand, Ph.D., who is retiring after 20 years as Associate Director and almost 40 years on the faculty at Monell.

Known for his seminal work in the molecular mechanisms of taste detection, Margolskee joined the Monell faculty in 2009. He intends to take advantage of his new position to contribute to Monell’s growth in several ways. “I think I can bring an outsider’s perspective to bear on Monell’s future,” he said. “Monell is entering a recruitment phase and I look forward to having a role in hiring the next generation of Monell faculty.”

Margolskee also expects that his medical training will help expand Monell’s increasing focus on health and well-being. “My M.D.-Ph.D. background will enable me to bring insights from basic and translational research to bear on the research environment at Monell,” he said.

A pioneer in the use of molecular biology to study mechanisms of taste transduction, Margolskee has been responsible for major advances in the field of taste biology. His seminal discovery of gustducin, a transducin-related “G-protein” expressed in taste cells, ultimately led to a comprehensive understanding of taste cell transduction, the intracellular signaling pathway that enables taste receptor cells to translate chemical information from a taste stimulus into an electrical signal that can be processed by the nervous system.

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More recently, Dr. Margolskee has extended his knowledge of taste detection to probe the mechanisms and functions of taste receptors located in the gastrointestinal tract and other organs throughout the body. These extra-oral receptors most likely play an important role in regulating food intake, nutrition, metabolism, and hormone release.

Dr. Margolskee received his undergraduate degree from Harvard University and his M.D.-Ph.D. in Molecular Genetics from Johns Hopkins University. While on the faculty of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, he was an Associate Investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute from 1997 to 2005. He is an author on over 100 peer-reviewed articles, which have been published in such prestigious journals as Nature, Science, Nature Neuroscience, and Scientific American.

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.

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