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New Monell Board Members Focus on the Future of Basic Research

PHILADELPHIA (July 20, 2016) – The Monell Center is pleased to welcome Garret S. FitzGerald, MD, FRS, and Maurizio Morello, Esquire, to its Board of Directors.

Garret S. FitzGerald, MD, FRS, who joined Monell’s Board in May 2016, sees an opportunity to strengthen the connection between Monell and the broader University of Pennsylvania community. The McNeil Professor in Translational Medicine and Therapeutics at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, he also chairs the Department of Pharmacology and directs the Institute for Translational Medicine and Therapeutics. While initially drawn to Monell by respect for the Center’s Director Robert Margolskee and an interest in sensory research, Dr. FitzGerald ultimately was won over by the quality of Monell’s science. He notes, “It is an honor to serve on Monell’s board of directors.”

Dr. FitzGerald’s own work in translational medicine, which focuses on coordinating basic research and applied therapies, is characterized by an integrated approach using cells, model organisms and humans to investigate drug mechanisms. This multimodal research program gives him a unique understanding of Monell’s scientific range and depth, and of the translational significance of the Center’s research.

“Monell’s research is relevant to so many diverse aspects of human biology,” Dr. FitzGerald says. “I believe we can further leverage Monell’s expertise through new collaborations, both at home in Philadelphia and abroad, especially in the domain of translational science. I intend to encourage closer ties between Monell, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.”

“Dr. FitzGerald’s superb academic standing combines with his intimate knowledge of the University of Pennsylvania’s organization and programs to bring valuable guidance in strengthening our very important relationship with the University,” said Monell Board Chair Dwight Risky, PhD.

A leader in cardiovascular research, Dr. FitzGerald was the first to discover a molecular clock in the cardiovascular system, which prompted studies into the role of peripheral clocks in cardiometabolic disease. His work on prostaglandins and their inhibitors contributed substantially to the development of low-dose aspirin for cardioprotection. Dr. FitzGerald’s group was the first to predict and then mechanistically explain how NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) can counteract the cardioprotective effects of aspirin.



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Dr. FitzGerald received his medical degree and a degree in pharmacology from University College, Dublin, and a master's degree in statistics from the University of London.

Maurizio Morello, Esq., who joined the Board in February 2016, has been familiar with the Center for almost two decades. A partner at the New York law firm Fulton Vittoria LLP, he has been affiliated with the Ambrose Monell Foundation, which granted the Center's founding gift, for over 16 years. During that time, Mr. Morello worked closely with the Monell Foundation's long time president George Rowe, Jr., a founding Monell Center board member and long-time supporter of the Center. The two often spoke about the Center, and over time Mr. Morello developed an appreciation of the significance of Monell's research.

A fierce proponent of basic scientific research, Mr. Morello sees his role on the board of directors as an opportunity to advocate for continued scientific advancement related to taste and smell. "New discoveries in the field of the chemical senses have opened, and will continue to open, doors in many areas of science," he says. "Monell's scientists are at the forefront of these vital explorations into how these senses contribute to human health and disease."

Monell Board Chair Dwight Risky, PhD, comments, "We have known Mr. Morello for many years and have greatly benefitted from his interest and support. With his appointment to the Board, we are delighted that he will bring his broad expertise even more directly to bear in helping Monell chart our future direction."

An avid traveler, Mr. Morello has lived around the globe, and expects his experiences in adapting quickly to new situations will serve him well on the Monell board.

Mr. Morello received his doctorate degree in law from the University of Milan, Italy, and a master's degree in banking, corporate and finance law from Fordham University School of Law. In addition to serving on the board of directors of the Ambrose Monell Foundation, he also is a board member of the G. Unger Vetlesen Foundation, the van Ameringen Foundation, and Virginia Dare Extract Co., Inc., a family owned flavor and extracts company, as well as its Asian subsidiary.

The Monell Chemical Senses Center is an independent nonprofit basic research institute based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. For over 48 years, Monell has advanced 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-



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being; development, aging and regeneration; and chemical ecology and communication.
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