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Robert R. Rich, M.D., Selected as Next Editor-in-Chief of The Journal of Immunology

The American Association of Immunologists (AAI) Council recently announced the selection of Dr. Robert R. Rich, the current FASEB president and a deputy editor of The Journal of Immunology (The JI) since 1997, to be the next editor-in-chief of The JI. Dr. Rich will succeed Dr. Frank W. Fitch, whose distinguished term as editor-in-chief will conclude on December 31, 2002.

Dr. Rich, Executive Associate Dean and Professor of Medicine and of Microbiology and Immunology at Emory University School of Medicine, served as chair of AAI’s Committee on Public Affairs from 1994 to 2000. He is currently a member of the Advisory Panel on Research of the Association of American Medical Colleges and of the National Human Research Protections Advisory Committee of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. He serves as a Councilor of the American Clinical and Climatological Association and as Vice President of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, where he served previously as Chairman of its Professional Education Council.

He is editor-in-chief of the comprehensive Clinical Immunology: Principles and Practice textbook. His other appointments to editorial boards have included The Journal of Experimental Medicine, The Journal of Infectious Diseases, The Journal of Clinical Immunology, and Clinical and Experimental Immunology.

Dr. Rich received his M.D. from the University of Kansas and completed an internship and residency in internal medicine at the University of Washington. He had subspecialty training in Allergy and Immunology and postdoctoral fellowships at the National Institutes of Health and Harvard Medical School. In 1973, Dr. Rich joined the faculty of Baylor College of Medicine as Assistant Professor of Microbiology and Immunology and Medicine. In 1978, he was promoted to Professor and in 1995 was named Distinguished Service Professor. He was an Investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute from 1977 to 1991, and served from 1990 to 1998 as Vice President and Dean of Research at Baylor. He has served as a member and chairman of two National Institutes of Health study sections and on the boards of directors of the American Board of Allergy and Immunology (including as Chairman), the American Board of Internal Medicine, and the National Space Biomedical Research Institute. He is also past president of the Clinical Immunology Society.

Dr. Rich’s appointment as editor-in-chief-designate of The JI marked the culmination of a selection process initiated in 2001 by AAI’s Publications Committee. The committee solicited nominees via advertisements in Science, Journal of Experimental Medicine, Journal of Biological Chemistry, Pathology, The JI, and the AAI Newsletter and website, as well as by targeted e-mail notices. Eligibility required AAI membership in good standing and submission of an application, curriculum vitae, letter of interest and qualifications, and a statement concerning The JI’s conceptual direction and possible future innovations. The announcement described the position’s primary responsibility as “maintain[ing] the role of The JI as a definitive resource for immunology research by ensuring the scientific excellence of the content and the integrity of the peer-review process.” Applicants were evaluated and ranked in part on the basis of their scientific experience, leadership ability, editorial experience, and ideas for the future of The JI.

Following the June 30, 2001, application deadline, the Publications Committee reviewed and ranked the applications submitted. Finalists were selected for interviews conducted at the October 1, 2001, Publications Committee meeting in Bethesda, MD, after which a committee recommendation was voted on and forwarded to the AAI Council. AAI President Jim Allison’s October 11, 2001, letter to Rich formally offered the appointment.

In accepting the appointment, Dr. Rich called The JI “clearly one of the first-rank journals in immunology,” adding that “no other journal packs nearly so much important immunology between its covers.” Citing the “extraordinary leadership” of Dr. Fitch, Rich expressed his intention to “see that The JI remains a journal of choice for contributors and readers, . . . continues a tradition of fairness and excellence.
in peer review and efficiency of publication, and...meets in an exemplar
does not meet, in an exemplary manner the needs and interests of the AAI and of the immu
nology community everywhere."

Dr. Rich will formally assume the reins as editor-in-chief on January 1, 2003, for a term extending through June 30, 2007. In
keeping with past practice, a six-month, informal “overlap period”
will be observed in which the current and incoming editors-in
chief work closely to ensure an effective and orderly transition.

Founded in 1916, *The JI* is one of the most cited publications in
biomedicine. The AAI Council and the Bethesda staff of *The JI*
and AAI congratulates Dr. Rich on his appointment and looks
forward to contributing to his success in this new role.