



## CANDIAN COLLEGE OF MEDICAL GENETICISTS (CCMG) The F. Clarke Fraser Award for Excellence in Mentorship and Teaching Award

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**Document:** The CCMG-CCGM F. Clarke Fraser Award for Excellence in Mentorship and Teaching Terms of Reference

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### Brief Description

Dr. F. Clarke Fraser (1920-2014) was Canada's first Medical Geneticist. His initial plan to be a family doctor was derailed in 1937 by two lectures in Genetics at Acadia University in Nova Scotia. He went on to obtain a PhD in Genetics, followed by his MD in 1950. He described his early career as a "castaway on a desert island without a map", as he was permitted to fulfil his internship requirements by starting the Division of Human Genetics in the Department of Paediatrics at McGill University. Dr. Fraser's demonstration that cleft palate could be induced in mice prenatally exposed to cortisone was a pioneering discovery that led to the birth of the field of Teratology, and from which the Multifactorial Threshold Model was developed. He was a dedicated and passionate teacher, and a compassionate and generous mentor and role model, who is credited as the father of Genetic Counselling.



Dr. Fraser received numerous awards and widespread recognition for his work, including Officer of the Order of Canada, ASHG Award for Excellence in Education, le Prix du Quebec Wilder-Penfield, Canadian Medical Hall of Fame, and several honorary degrees.



Dr. Fraser was born in Connecticut, and spent most of his childhood in Jamaica, with summers in Bear River, Nova Scotia. In his autobiographical essay (Of Mice and Children, AJHG Part A (2008); 146A:2179-2202), Dr. Fraser described his father as a quiet and reserved man who loved poetry, and his mother as vivacious, loving and demonstrative. He talks about impromptu concerts in the parlour, with his father at the piano and his mother singing in her beautiful alto voice. In 1999, Dr. Fraser returned permanently to his ancestral home in Bear River. He continued a connection to Genetics by assessing journal articles and writing book reviews for journals. He loved music, athletics, his family, and a scotch before dinner. He played rugby football until the age of 40, and tennis until 81. He was precise in his use of spoken and written English, his red pen a match for that of John Opitz. He had a genuine interest in other people.

Those closest to Dr. Fraser recall his irrepressible sense of humour and his penchant for composing blank verse (as he did on the occasion of his acceptance speech for the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame). The final line of his obituary was a quote: "He tried to be good". All would agree that what he did for Medical Genetics and Genetic Counselling in Canada was very good indeed.

## **Terms of Reference**

1. Nominations for the F. Clarke Fraser Award for Excellence in Mentorship and Teaching will be solicited annually to recognize a CCMG member who has made significant contributions as a Mentor and/or Teacher over the course of their career.
2. Nominations could come from anyone in the College, but nominations from trainees (past and present) will be strongly encouraged.
3. Nominations will be solicited at the same time as those for the John L. Hamerton Service Award and the Founders Award for Career Achievement.
4. The Awards and Nominations Committee reserves the right not to present the Award if there is no suitable nominee that year.
5. In the event of more than one nomination, the remaining nominees may be considered along with new applications in subsequent year(s).
6. The recipient of the award will be announced at the AGM. The recipient will not be required to pay the fees for conference registration or the banquet and the cost of travel to the conference and up to three nights at the conference hotel will be paid for by the board of the CCMG. All eligible expenses will be covered according to the CCMG Travel Policy.
7. If deemed appropriate by the scientific committee, a trainee/mentor event (such as a breakfast or other) or some other session, where the awardee would give a presentation, may be arranged.