



**Boston Biomedical
Research Institute**

*40th Anniversary of
Independence*

1968 - 2008

Program

Welcome

John R. Layton
President, Board of Trustees

The Early Years

Endre A. Balazs, M.D.
Co-founder

Dinner

John Gergely, M.D., Ph.D.
Co-founder

The Importance of Independent Research Institutes

Leroy M. Hood, Ph.D.
Founder, Institute for Systems Biology
Seattle, WA

What the Future Holds for BBRI

Charles P. Emerson, Jr., Ph.D.
Director and Senior Scientist

We thank you for joining us this evening as we celebrate our 40th Anniversary of Independence. We are so proud of our past and excited for our future. None of this would be possible without the support of you, our loyal friends of the Institute.



*Boston Biomedical Research Institute is honored to present
these distinguished scientists and innovators...*

Endre A. Balazs, M.D.

Co-founder, Boston Biomedical Research Institute

Endre A. Balazs, M.D., is the Chairman of Matrix Biology Institute and the Malcolm P. Aldrich Research Professor Emeritus at College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University, New York. Dr. Balazs received his medical degree from the University of Budapest (Hungary) where he also started his research career in 1938. He immigrated to Sweden in 1947 where he continued his research at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. In 1951 he moved to Boston and continued his research and teaching at the Department of Ophthalmology at Harvard Medical School. As Associate Director, he was in charge of establishing new research laboratories at the Retina Foundation (Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary); in 1962 he became President of the Institute of Biological and Medical Sciences of the Retina Foundation. In 1968 he was co-founder and first President of Boston Biomedical Research Institute, an independent non-profit biomedical research organization. In 1975 he was invited to the position of Director of Research at the Harkness Eye Institute of the Columbia Presbyterian Hospital and was appointed to the Malcolm P. Aldrich Research Professorship at the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University. In 1985, he co-founded Biomatrix, Inc., a biotechnology company (Ridgefield, NJ) as its CEO and Chief Scientific Officer. Since 2000, when Biomatrix merged with Genzyme Corporation, Dr. Balazs continues his research at the Matrix Biology Institute, a new non-profit research organization which he founded in 1982. Since his medical school days, Dr. Balazs has been involved in research to elucidate the biological role of the intercellular matrix, especially the role of its glycosaminoglycans content. His discoveries led to the use of hyaluronan as a therapeutic agent. He pioneered the use of this molecule by developing the first medically pure hyaluronan and its gel derivative and started clinical studies in several fields of medicine. His scientific discoveries were awarded by various organizations including honorary doctoral degrees from the University of Budapest (Hungary), University of Uppsala (Sweden) and Purdue University (USA).

John Gergely, M.D., Ph.D.

Co-founder, Boston Biomedical Research Institute

Dr. John Gergely was born and raised in Hungary, and earned his M.D. at the University of Budapest in 1942. He started his research career in the Department of Pharmacology of that University. In 1946 he joined the University's Department of Biochemistry, headed by the Nobel Prize winner Albert Szent-Györgyi. That same year, Dr. Gergely, having received a British Council Scholarship, enrolled in the University of Leeds, U.K., where, stimulated by some of Szent-Györgyi's ideas, he studied quantum aspects of biochemistry—the idea that proteins can exhibit properties similar to semiconductors. When Dr. Gergely earned his Ph.D. from Leeds in 1948, he came to the United States and obtained a position at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland, where Szent-Györgyi had been given a laboratory. Dr. Gergely stayed at the NIH for two years, and in September 1950, moved to the University of Wisconsin's Enzyme Institute for a year's study before obtaining a position at Massachusetts General Hospital, Department of Medicine, headed by Walter Bauer. Dr. Gergely has spent the rest of his career in Boston, as a biochemist in the Department of Neurology at Mass General, as Associate Professor in the Department of Biological Chemistry and Molecular Pharmacology at Harvard Medical School, and as Senior Scientist at Boston Biomedical Research Institute. In 1961, he joined the Retina Foundation to initiate a program in muscle research which subsequently became internationally prominent. In 1968, he was co-founder of Boston Biomedical Research Institute where he has remained a Senior Scientist for the past 40 years, taking several turns as Director. This program has made fundamental contributions to the characterization of the contractile and regulatory apparatus of striated and smooth muscle. These include the elucidation of the role of the troponins, which are important regulatory components of skeletal and heart muscle now known to play a role in the early diagnosis of heart attacks. In 1987 he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Medical Science (D.M.Sc.) degree by Semmelweis University in Hungary. In 2000, Dr. Gergely was made an honorary member of the Hungarian Academy of Science.