Introduction to the Reproductive Hormones and Human Health Focus Issue for *Endocrinology*

Reproductive hormones were among the first endocrine substances discovered and characterized, and these hormones became the stalwarts of endocrine research for many years. It is now clear that reproductive hormones are more than the original small molecular weight lipophilic molecules that induced estrus; through progressive research, our understanding of them has expanded to see them as substances with a multitude of actions and target sites, possessing a wide variety of biochemical structures, from peptide to prostacycline. Most dramatic has been the realization that reproductive hormones affect the general physiology of both sexes, independent of the expected sex-specific hormonal substances and sites of action. Thus, it is fitting that The Endocrine Society has selected “Reproductive Hormones and Human Health” as the focus for this year’s annual meeting.

As a complement to the 83rd Annual Meeting of The Endocrine Society, we are pleased to highlight in this issue of *Endocrinology* papers that exemplify the spectrum of current experimental studies and illustrate the diverse responses and modes of action of reproductive hormones. These manuscripts were subjected to our standard peer review process. Additionally, we present a group of invited perspective articles by leading investigators in a variety of areas. We decided to lead off the perspectives with Neena Schwartz’s historical account of the early days in reproductive hormone research, followed by descriptions of different aspects of reproductive hormones and human health. We thank Drs. Neena Schwartz, David T. MacLaughlin, Jose Teixeira, Patricia K. Donahoe, Stephanie B. Seminara, William F. Crowley, Jr., Ilpo Huhtaniemi, Andrzej Bartke, JoAnne S. Richards, Orla M. Conneely, Stavros C. Manolagas, and S. Kousteni for their contributions to this issue.

On the cover, we have elected to present photos of attendees of the First Hormone Action Gordon Conference, where many of the fundamental discoveries of hormone research were presented. It is reassuring that some of the same investigators are still attending and speaking at this conference some three decades later. More difficult was choosing, among the many possibilities, photos of some of the early leaders in reproductive hormone research. Such opportunity provides a pleasant reminder to many of us who knew these investigators, but more importantly it matches a face with a name for many of our current students, post-doctoral fellows, and younger faculty for whom these individuals are leaders but who would otherwise be names in reference books. Regrettably, through this selection we are unable to represent all the individuals whose work had major impacts and influenced reproductive hormone research and the field of endocrinology.

We are fortunate that many research groups were excited about this year’s science focus and that they submitted many papers for review and consideration. We thank them for their enthusiastic response. We trust that you will find that this issue brings together reports of some of the most current and cutting-edge research in reproductive hormones, describing a more detailed analysis of known actions but also broadening and illustrating the new emerging mechanisms and sites of action.

Kenneth S. Korach, Ph.D. Editor-in-Chief
Jon E. Levine, Ph.D., Editor
Michael H. Melner, Ph.D., Editor