

► Presidential Award

The ERS President takes great pleasure in honouring Prof. Dirkje S. Postma as the 2009 ERS Presidential Awardee.



Prof. Dirkje S. Postma

Born in Friesland, the Netherlands Dirkje S. Postma gained her MD at Groningen University. After a one-year fellowship in cardiology and a residency in internal medicine in Arnhem Municipal Hospital, she finished her respiratory training at the University Medical Centre Groningen in 1984. She performed her PhD training during her residency in Respiratory Medicine and defended her thesis on "reversibility of chronic airflow obstruction" in 1984. She then started her position as a fellow founded by the Dutch Asthma Foundation, followed by a staff position that she holds to the present day. She became first a professor on behalf of the Dutch Asthma Foundation (1993), followed by a full professorship at the University of Groningen (1998) with a chair entitled "Professor in the pathophysiology of lung diseases and especially of obstructive airway diseases". She currently holds the honorary chair of a Professorship awarded by the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences in the Netherlands.

She has received much recognition, membership of the Belgian and Dutch Royal Academy of Sciences, and fellowship of the Royal College of Chest Physicians in the UK. She also received the Spinoza Premium in the Netherlands, an award for research esteem by the Dutch Government.

She always combined her research with clinical work and expressed this as being beneficial to both ends, solving patients questions by the research of her group.

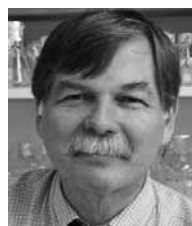
Prof. Postma always paid attention to tutoring and mentoring her PhD fellows and many of them have become outstanding clinicians and researchers and some became professors in their own field of interest.

She has authored more than 500 publications in peer reviewed journals and 70 book chapters. Prof. Postma has focussed her research on the pathophysiology of both asthma and COPD, which includes the spectrum of genetics of asthma and COPD, basic science in cell activation pathways, and improvement of clinical management in association with investigations of the pathophysiology. Her research started with a study on risk factors for mortality in COPD patients and it showed that corticosteroids might have a beneficial effect. This finding has led to her various interests ranging from the patient's perspective to the underlying disease mechanisms of asthma and COPD. Translation of results of epidemiologic and basic research into a better understanding of the pathophysiology and patient management of asthma and COPD has been a longstanding interest.

She has always worked in a transdisciplinary way, collaborating with specialists from all fields that form the Groningen Research Institute for Asthma and COPD (GRIAC) which she has chaired for over 12 years.

► Congress Chair Award

The Congress Chairs take great pleasure in honouring Dr Norbert F. Voelkel as the 2009 ERS Congress Chair Awardee. Dr Voelkel is given this award in recognition of his strong commitment to respiratory medicine, within the United States as well as internationally. Dr Voelkel is



Dr Norbert F. Voelkel

director of the Victoria Johnson Centre for Obstructive Lung Diseases. He is also Professor of Medicine in the Division of Pulmonary Sciences and Critical Care Medicine at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Centre (UCHSC). In 1992 he became the director of the Pulmonary Hypertension Centre at UCHSC and in 2002 the director of its COPD Centre. After completing a four-year fellowship in pulmonary medicine at UCHSC, he joined the faculty in 1981, moving from assistant professor in 1982 to associate professor in 1986 to full professor in 1991. In 1999 he received an endowed chair as the Hart Family Professor of Emphysema Research.

Dr Voelkel earned his medical degree from the University of Hamburg Medical School in 1972 and completed a four-year residency (1973-1977) in internal medicine at that institution. Between 1977 and 1981 Dr Voelkel held two fellowships at University of Colorado Health Sciences Center: a research position in the Cardiovascular Pulmonary Research Laboratory and a clinical position in the Pulmonary Division.

Author and/or co-author of 285 peer-reviewed publications, Dr Voelkel currently holds National Institute of Health grants in the areas of biomarkers in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, primary pulmonary hypertension, and endothelial cell death in smoking-induced emphysema. He has received numerous international honours and awards, sits on several major committees in his field, is a reviewer for the New England Journal of Medicine and other noted journals, and been a visiting professor or invited lecturer throughout Europe and North America, as well as in Asia and South America.

These awards will be presented during the opening ceremony (Saturday, September 12, from 17:45 in Room D3, Hall D.)