

The Society for Craniofacial Genetics and Developmental Biology: a brief history



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The Society of Craniofacial Genetics (SCG) was founded in 1975 under first President, David Bixler (1929-2005), with the motto :”Educatio, Investigatio, Communicatio”. The SCG held its inaugural meeting in 1975 in Baltimore, MD and initially published a Newsletter: “*The Locus*”. Subsequent meeting reports were recorded in the SCG’s official journal: “*Journal of Craniofacial Genetics and Developmental Biology*”, published by Blackwell, which ceased publication in 2000.

In the early years of SCG, annual meetings were held in conjunction with March of Dimes Birth Defects meetings. Later, SCG began to host their meetings immediately preceding the American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) annual meetings. Meetings were held successively in various cities in the USA, Mexico and Canada. In 2012 the Society changed its name from the Society for Craniofacial Genetics to the Society for Craniofacial Genetics and Developmental Biology (SCGDB). The addition of Developmental Biology reflected the increased diversity of professional interests among members, especially in developmental biology and the intersection of development, genetics, evolution and disease. The 2019 meeting in Houston marks the 44th year of the Society’s existence.

In response to a proposal by Paul Trainor (President 2015-2016), the attendees in 2015 voted to alternate the timing of the of the SCGDB annual meeting between the ASHG and the Society for Developmental Biology (SDB) or other meetings and craniofacial centers as desired. This reflected the developmental and evolutionary biology interests of its members in addition to genetics and disease. Accordingly, the 2015 meeting saw the expansion of the meeting from one day to an afternoon/evening plus a full day. This was designed to accommodate the addition of a dedicated clinical session involving surgeons and clinical geneticists, and to provide more opportunities and time for oral and poster presentations, especially from junior investigators.

The 2016 and 2017 SCGDB annual meetings were held in Boston and Minneapolis respectively, in conjunction with the SDB’s 75th and 76th annual meetings. The SCGDB’s 2016 meeting was combined not only with the SDB’s 75th annual meeting but

also with the International Society of Differentiation's 19th International Conference in Boston, MA, August 4-8, 2016. The expanded meetings added clinical sessions to include patient advocates in addition to surgeons and clinical geneticists. An extensive exhibition by publishers and research centers highlighted this meeting (Taneyhill et al., 2016). The 2018 and 2019 SCGDB annual meetings coincided with ASHG in La Jolla and Houston, respectively. Reports of the abstracts of the papers presented at these meetings have been published in the *American Journal of Medical Genetics* since 2011 (see References below).

The 2019 annual meeting marked the introduction of the David Bixler and the Marylou Buyse Excellence in Craniofacial Research awards, sponsored by *Developmental Dynamics*. These research awards were proposed by the SCGDB Advisory committee (Paul Trainor – past president, and Scott Lozanoff – past secretary/treasurer) to recognize the achievements of SCGDB members, and to also promote the field of craniofacial biology. The David Bixler and Marylou Buyse awards celebrate meritorious achievements in craniofacial biology by senior career and mid-career SCGDB members, and are respectively named after the first SCGDB President, and first female SCGDB President. The first two awardees are Joan Richtsmeier and Amy Merrill-Brugger.

The 2019 annual meeting also marked the establishment of SCGDB's Distinguished Service Award. In parallel with the Excellence in Craniofacial Research Awards, the current SCGDB Executive Board, led by President Sally Moody, recognized the importance of appreciating the dedicated service of members to SCGDB and created a Distinguished Service Award. Geoffrey Sperber, who served as the Secretary/Treasurer of the SCGDB from 2004 to 2011, is the first awardee.

Each of SCGDB's awardees were recognized at the annual meeting through an oral presentation and receipt of a commemorative plaque.

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