Searching for the Neural Basis of Mood Disorders

Sponsored by the UC Davis Center for Neuroscience, Cajal Club and the Journal of Comparative Neurology and its publishers John Wiley & Sons

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Huda Akil, Ph.D. is the Gardner Quarton Distinguished University Professor of Neuroscience and Psychiatry and the Co-Director of the Molecular & Behavioral Neuroscience Institute (MBNI) at the University of Michigan. Dr. Akil together with Dr. Stanley J. Watson and their colleagues have made seminal contributions to the understanding of the brain biology of emotions, including pain, anxiety, depression and substance abuse. She and her collaborators provided the first physiological evidence for a role of endorphins in the brain, and showed that endorphins are activated by stress and cause pain inhibition.

Dr. Akil's current research investigates the genetic, molecular and neural mechanisms underlying stress, addiction and mood disorders. Along with Dr. Watson, she is the Michigan Site Director of the Pritzker Consortium, which is engaged in large-scale studies to discover new genes and proteins that cause vulnerability to major depression and bipolar illness. She is the author of over 500 original scientific papers, and has been recognized as one of the most highly cited neuroscientists by the ISI Citation Index.

Edward G. (Ted) Jones committed more than 50 years to groundbreaking research in the emerging field of neuroscience. His legacy includes seminal contributions to basic neuroscience and the understanding of brain disorders; direction of the UC Davis Center for Neuroscience; and remarkable classic works on the thalamus and the history of neuroscience.