

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

A Hall of Fame Scientist and Mentor

Microbiologist Barbara Iglewski is the third Rochester faculty member inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

By Emily Boynton

An internationally regarded microbiologist who made history at the Medical Center joined a history-making group of American women this fall.

Barbara Iglewski, a professor emerita in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, New York, considered the birthplace of the American women's rights movement.

The nation's oldest organization dedicated to recognizing and celebrating the achievements of great American women, the hall was created in 1969. Every two years, the hall honors a group of women nominated by the public and chosen by a national panel of experts.

One of 10 inductees in 2015, Iglewski was selected for her research on how bacteria cause infections. Her laboratory was the first to discover that bacteria use a communication system—a type of chemical language—to coordinate attacks on human cells and initiate disease.

Her work launched an entire field of study into how the system works in many types of bacteria. Several drugs designed to interrupt the communication process and prevent infection are being developed.

"I think the Hall of Fame is amazing and I am overwhelmed by this huge honor," says Iglewski. "When you look at all of the members, women who have had such a profound influence on me and so many others in our society, it puts you in awe of what they have accomplished."

The first woman from the medical school, Iglewski is the third from the University to be inducted. She joins Judith Pipher, a professor emerita of physics and astronomy, who was inducted in 2007, and Loretta Ford, the founding dean of the School of Nursing, who was inducted in 2011.

Iglewski pursued a career in science after accompanying her father, a country physician, on house calls and spending hours answering the phone and playing with microscopes in his office.

She received her PhD in microbiology from Penn State University, held her first position as an instructor at the Oregon Health and Science University School of



HALL OF FAME: Internationally regarded for her work as a microbiologist, Iglewski was the first woman to chair the Department of Microbiology and Immunology.

Medicine, and was recruited to Rochester in 1986 to serve as chair of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology. She was the first female department chair at the School of Medicine and Dentistry, a position she held until 2009.

The author of more than 150 research papers and book chapters, Iglewski is recognized by the Institute of Scientific Information as a highly cited scientist, a group that makes up less than 0.5 percent of all publishing researchers.

She served as president of the American Society for Microbiology from 1987 to 1988 and chaired the organization's publications board from 1990 to 1999—a time when very few women served on editorial boards.

Iglewski is credited with leading efforts to increase the number of women holding

editorial positions among the society's scientific journals.

Also inducted this fall was Philippa Marack '91 (Honorary), a former member of the School of Medicine and Dentistry's faculty who now holds positions at National Jewish Health and the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in Denver.

Others with Rochester connections include the late Mary Steichen Calderone '39M (MD), who established the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States.

An author and coauthor of several books, professional journals, and magazine articles, Calderone was inducted in 1998. And Rochester-based women's rights activist Susan B. Anthony was inducted in 1972. 