

NEWS

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*****Biochemist known for hormone re-
search to head Pharmacology at
UTHSCD.

DALLAS--A biochemist internationally known for his work on how hormones act at the cell surface to produce biological signals that allow the cell to communicate with its environment will become chairman of the Department of Pharmacology at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas next fall.

In announcing his appointment, President Charles C. Sprague said, "We are indeed fortunate to be able to attract a scientist of the caliber of Dr. Martin Rodbell."

Rodbell is currently chief of the Laboratory of Nutrition and Endocrinology of the National Institute of Arthritis, Metabolism and Digestive Diseases in Bethesda, Md. He has held this post since 1973. Also since 1970 he has served as adjunct professor of physiology at Georgetown University.

The new chairman will succeed Dr. Andres Goth, the only chairman of the department since it was organized in 1950. Goth had expressed his desire to relinquish administrative duties two years ago. Since that time a search committee chaired by Dr. Jonathan Uhr had been looking for the "right replacement," says Dr. Frederick Bonte, dean of Southwestern Medical School, a component of UTHSCD.

"Dr. Uhr and other members of the search committee are to be congratulated on recommending one of the most significant appointments ever made at this medical school. Dr. Rodbell's work is universally known," says Bonte.

Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Dr. Kern Wildenthal also expressed enthusiasm over the new appointment. "Dr. Rodbell has made major contributions toward understanding the mechanisms by which the actions of many drugs and hormones are regulated. His studies of adenylate cyclase, a key enzyme in cellular function, are of fundamental importance."

Rodbell looks forward to his new position as "terribly exciting."

"Most of the people here at NIH responded with a great deal of enthusiasm--and envy--when they heard about it. That shows they recognize the health science center as a first-rate medical center," he said.

His plans for the Pharmacology Department include the addition of more research into the action of drugs and hormones at the cellular level. These actions are related to the cell membrane.

In diabetes, for example, the hormone insulin is required for maintaining sugar metabolism at a constant level. The actions of insulin occur at the cell membrane.

"The study of cell physiology is so important in understanding how hormones and, to some extent, drugs allow the cell to communicate with its environment and maintain a constant environment," said Rodbell.

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Rodbell has been at the National Institutes of Health for the last 24 years with the exception of two stints in Europe. In 1967-68 he served as professor at Institut de Biochimie Clinique in Geneva, and in 1960-61 he had an NIH training grant at University of Brussels and at Leiden University. He has been with NIAMDD since 1961. Previously he was a biochemist for the National Heart Institute.

He received a Ph.D. in biochemistry from University of Washington in 1954 and then did two years of postdoctoral research at University of Illinois.

The author of more than 90 scientific articles, he serves on the editorial boards of Journal of Molecular Pharmacology, Advances in Cyclic Nucleotide Research, Receptors, Current Topics in Membrane Research, American Journal of Physiology and Life Sciences.

In 1974 he received both the JACOBBAUS Award from Acta Scandinavia Society in Oslo and the Superior Service Award from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. He is a member of American Society of Biological Chemists, Canadian Society of Biological Chemists and European Association for the Study of Diabetes. He is an associate member of British Royal Society of Medicine.

Committee Chairman Uhr states that Rodbell is a superb scientist working on a problem that is central to the field of pharmacology. "He will continue the tradition of excellence established by Dr. Goth."

Goth came to the school at a time when its resources were "very slender," Bonte observes, "and he used them so wisely that he was able to build a department that is pre-eminent among pharmacology departments in the nation. Early on, he was able to persuade well-known faculty to come to a virtually unknown school."

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