The 2026 Paul F. Glenn Center for the Biology of Aging Research

Symposium on Aging

June 8, 2026

GLENN FOUNDATION
FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

BLAVATNIK INSTITUTE
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The Paul F. Glenn Center for the Biology of Aging Research

Each year the Center hosts the Harvard Symposium on Aging with the goals of presenting recent advances in aging research and stimulating interaction and collaboration. We wish to acknowledge the generosity and vision of Paul F. Glenn, Leonard Judson, and Mark Collins for their continuing support of aging research through the Glenn Foundation for Medical Research.

There is a compelling rationale for accelerating research into the biology of aging. As a consequence of reduced early life mortality and medical advances, the number of aged individuals in the US and other nations is increasing rapidly. This has given rise to new socioeconomic issues involving long-term care, medical care delivery, and the structure of our society. These developments impress upon us the importance of extending the healthy lifespan through a greater understanding of normal aging and age-related diseases at the molecular and cellular levels.

Advances in aging biology have shown that it may be possible to extend the healthy lifespan and potentially intervene in major age-related pathology, including metabolic diseases, neurodegenerative disorders and cancer. New human clinical trials of interventions based on laboratory studies of aging are now in progress. As such, this is a very dynamic and exciting time for the field.

We welcome you to the 2026 Annual Harvard/Paul F. Glenn Symposium on Aging.

Marcia Haigis and Bruce Yankner

Co-Directors, Paul F. Glenn Center for Biology of Aging Research

Symposium on Aging Agenda
June 8, 2026
1:00 PM - 5:30 PM

1:00 PM to 1:15 PM	**Welcome**
1:15 PM to 1:50 PM	**Metabolic-Epigenetic Pathways in Senescence and Aging** Shelley Berger, PhD University of Pennsylvania
1:50 PM to 2:25 PM	**Disentangling Aging-Related Normal Tissue Evolution from Cancer Causation** Kamila Naxerova, PhD HMS
2:25 PM to 3:00 PM	**Lithium and the Biology of Aging and Neurodegeneration** Bruce Yankner, MD, Ph.D. HMS
3:00 PM to 3:20 PM	**Coffee/Tea/Water break**
3:20 PM to 3:55 PM	**Capturing Neuronal Maturation and Age in Human Pluripotent Stem Cells** Lorenz Studer, MD Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
3:55 PM to 4:30 PM	**A Neural Basis for Inflammation in Aging** Michael Segel, PhD Harvard University
4:30 PM to 5:05 PM	**Skin Stem Cells: Coping with Stress as We Age** Elaine Fuchs, PhD The Rockefeller University
5:05 PM to 5:15 PM	**Closing Remarks**
5:15 PM to 6:00 PM	**Reception**

Shelley Berger, PhD

Shelley Berger PhD is the Daniel S. Och University Professor at the University of Pennsylvania and previously held the Hilary Koprowski Professorship at the Wistar Institute in Philadelphia. Dr. Berger serves as director of the Epigenetics Institute in the Penn Perelman School of Medicine. Dr. Berger earned her PhD from University of Michigan and was a post-doctoral fellow at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She was awarded the Penn Medicine Cohen Biomedical Research Award and the Penn Biomedical Postdoctoral Distinguished Mentor Award. She has >30 years of experience in mentoring and training graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, now successful in careers in academia, pharmaceutical industry, scientific writing, and teaching. Dr. Berger is committed to improving academic training for graduate students and postdocs; in 2023 she initiated and co-led a Working Group for the Advisory Committee to the NIH Director, "Re-envisioning Postdoctoral Training in US Biomedicine".

Dr. Berger is an elected fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Medicine, American Association of Cancer Research, Academy of Healthspan and Lifespan Research,, and American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Her work over thirty years helped to launch the modern era of chromatin biology and epigenetics. Her discoveries provided a paradigm for mechanisms of histone and factor modifying enzymes in gene regulation. Recent research revealed a vital role of histone and factor modifications in aging and senescence, cancer, mammalian memory and Alzheimer's disease, as well as revealing a decisive role underlying organismal level behavior and aging in ant models of complex sociality.

Metabolic-Epigenetic Pathways in Senescence and Aging

Elaine Fuchs, PhD

Elaine Fuchs uses skin as a model to understand how stem cells make and repair tissues and what goes awry in cancers and inflammation. She is an Investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and has published >380 manuscripts. She received her Ph.D. from Princeton in Biochemistry, her postdoctorate in Cell Biology at MIT, and was recruited from the University of Chicago to Rockefeller University in 2002. Her awards include the National Medal of Science, L'Oreal-UNESCO Award, International Society for Stem Cell Research's Innovation Award, the Gairdner International Award and the Franklin Medal. Fuchs holds membership in the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Medicine, American Philosophical Society, Pontifical Academy of Sciences, and the Royal Society. She is an inaugural member of the Academy of the American Association for Cancer Research, and currently serves as its President.

Skin Stem Cells: Coping with Stress as We Age

Kamila Naxerova, PhD

Kamila Naxerova's lab studies somatic evolution. Kamila obtained her undergraduate degree in Molecular Biotechnology from Heidelberg University in Germany, and her PhD in Human Biology and Translational Medicine from Harvard University. She completed her postdoc with Stephen Elledge at Harvard Medical School. After starting her own lab at MGH's Center for Systems Biology, Kamila joined the HMS Genetics department in 2023. Kamila loves genetics and German literature.

Michael Segel, PhD

Michael is an assistant professor of Stem Cell and Regenerative Biology at Harvard University. He did his PhD in neuroscience in the lab of Robin Franklin at the University of Cambridge and his postdoctoral research in the lab of Feng Zhang at MIT/Broad Institute.

Disentangling Aging-Related Normal Tissue Evolution From Cancer Causation

A Neural Basis for Inflammation in Aging

Lorenz Studer, MD

Dr. Lorenz Studer is the founding director of the Center for Stem Cell Biology at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, the Enid A Haupt Chair in Developmental Biology, and current President-Elect of the International Society of Stem Cell Research (ISSCR). His lab has pioneered many of the currently available protocols for the directed differentiation on human pluripotent stem cells into lineages of the central and peripheral nervous system. His group has also been among the first to realize the potential of patient-specific stem cells for modeling neurodevelopment and neurodegenerative disorders. His team further developed innovative strategies to measure and manipulate cellular age and to accelerate maturation of human pluripotent-derived cell lineages. Finally, he has led the application of pluripotent stem cells in regenerative medicine including the treatment of Parkinson's disease. In 2020, the work got cleared for a first-in-human clinical study in patients with advanced PD and has progressed since to an ongoing phase III registration trial. Awards related to his work include a MacArthur Fellowship, Ogawa-Yamanaka Prize, Gabbay award, ISSCR achievement award and election to the US National Academy of Medicine.

Capturing Neuronal Maturation and Age in Human Pluripotent Stem Cells

Bruce Yankner, MD, PhD

Bruce A. Yankner, M.D., Ph.D. is Professor of Genetics and Neurology at Harvard Medical School, Co-Director of the Paul F. Glenn Center for Biology of Aging Research, and Director of the Harvard Neurodegeneration Training Program. Dr. Yankner graduated from Princeton University, received his M.D. and Ph.D. from Stanford University, and did a residency at the Massachusetts General Hospital. His work has advanced our understanding of the basic science of aging, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, Down's syndrome, and psychiatric disease beginning with the discovery that amyloid proteins are toxic molecules. His laboratory described the transcriptome of the aging human brain, its evolution, and a role for DNA damage in gene regulation during aging. The Yankner laboratory has also contributed to our understanding of gene regulatory pathways that modulate aging, stress resistance, memory and Alzheimer's disease. Recently, the Yankner laboratory discovered that lithium is an endogenous, biologically active element that may be involved in aging and the onset of Alzheimer's disease. He has received the Major Award for Medical Research from the Metropolitan Life Foundation, the Derek Denny-Brown Neurological Scholar Award from the American Neurological Association, the Irving S. Cooper Award from the Mayo Clinic, the Zenith Award from the Alzheimer's Association, the Ellison Medical Foundation Senior Scholar Award, the Joseph A. Pignolo Award from the University of Pennsylvania, the Aging Mind Foundation Award, the Nathan W. Shock award from NIA, and the NIH Director's Pioneer Award and Transformative Research Award.

Lithium and the Biology of Aging and Neurodegeneration

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