

# A CENTURY

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Descendants of University of Michigan Medical School icon Frederick G. Novy, M.D., gathered in Ann Arbor in May to help celebrate the centennial anniversary of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology.

The department was founded in 1902 as the Department of Bacteriology under the chairmanship of Novy, a student of Robert Koch, who, with Louis Pasteur, virtually invented the field of bacteriology. Novy was an organic chemist who became interested in the field through his work with Victor Vaughan. Chair of the department for more than three decades, Novy then served as dean of the Medical School from 1935 to 1937 prior to his retirement. He was widely renowned as one of the most important scientists of his time and devoted his life to unraveling the mysteries of medical science and advancing public health. Novy's son and grandson earned M.D.s from U-M in 1927 and 1978.



Frederick G. Novy

In 1963, the department changed its name to the Department of Microbiology; in 1979, the current name was adopted in recognition of the newly established section in immunology. Modern developments in molecular biology were followed by rapid departmental expansion under the leadership of Frederick C. Neidhardt, Ph.D., the F.G. Novy Distinguished University Professor Emeritus of Microbiology and Immunology, who retired in 2000 after also having served as associate dean for faculty in the Medical School and as the University's vice president for research.

# OF ILLUSTRIOUS SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

THE DEPARTMENT OF MICROBIOLOGY AND IMMUNOLOGY TURNS 100

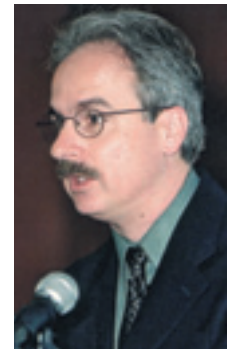
Photos by Gregory Fox



**Members of the Novy family in attendance at the symposium and their relationships to Frederick Novy: Front row: Frederick G. Novy III (M.D. 1978), grandson; Frances Novy Diack, daughter; Dorothy Novy Wilson, granddaughter; Barbara Webster, granddaughter. Middle row: Frances Diack Stearns, granddaughter; Elizabeth N. Proulx, granddaughter; Stella Webster, great granddaughter; Frank Proulx, great grandson. Back row: Greg Stagnuolo, great grandson; Elizabeth S. Proulx, great granddaughter; Mary Lambert, granddaughter.**



Fred Neidhardt



Michael Imperiale

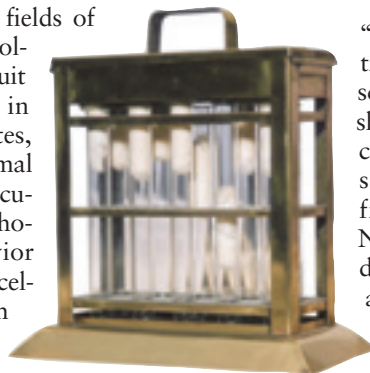
“We enter our second century well-poised to meet new challenges...”

—Michael Imperiale

Today, with Michael Imperiale, Ph.D., as the interim chair following the 2002 retirement of Michael Savageau, Ph.D., laboratories in Medical Science Building II are alive with inquiry and investigation, as scientists from undergraduate to emeritus work side-by-side in the many diverse and exciting fields of molecular and cellular biology. Recent areas of pursuit include gene regulation in prokaryotes and eukaryotes, molecular biology of animal and bacterial viruses, molecular bases of microbial pathogenesis, integrated behavior of complex molecular and cellular networks, and much more.

The Centennial Symposium served both to honor the memory and many achievements of Frederick Novy and to celebrate a department that has, over the past 100 years, developed into a leading interdisciplinary and

internationally renowned research center. Preparing the event was cause for deep reflection on the accomplishments of the department, and a renewed awareness of all who made them possible, says Neidhardt, department chair from 1970-1982.



“I was reminded of the truth that all of us in science stand on the shoulders of those who came before us,” he says. “The towering figure of Frederick Novy provided four decades of leadership and example for the Department, both in research and teaching. He was, in

the words of [bacteriologist, Michigan graduate and popular writer] Paul DeKruif, the apotheosis of the pure scientist. If not the first microbiology department in a medical school in this

country, ours was among the first, and was founded at a time when the germ theory of disease was not fully accepted.”

Neidhardt notes that the first Nobel Prize in literature awarded to an American was bestowed on Sinclair Lewis, largely for his book *Arrowsmith* — a novel centered on the contradictory aspects of the philosophy of science and medicine. The character Max Gottlieb was a depiction of Novy, he adds.

Says Imperiale, “Each day it seems the news brings reminders about how microbiology and immunology touch our lives: AIDS, SARS and other pathogens we have not confronted before, antibiotic resistance in those we have, new vaccines for the general health of our population or to counter the threat of bioterrorism and biowarfare. We enter our second century well-poised to meet new challenges, with a commitment to the highest levels of scholarship, education, and service to our community.”

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