

An Interview with Dr. David Traver, PhD, Recipient of the 2019 ISEH McCulloch & Till Award

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ISEH Headquarters

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Interviewed by Novella Guidi of the ISEH New Investigators Committee

What key question would you like to answer with your science?

What has been the biggest challenge that you have to face in your career?

What do you most value in a student or a member of your team?

What advice can you offer aspiring new scientists?

Hoping to connect with Dr. Traver in person?

You can do that in Brisbane at the 2019 ISEH Annual Scientific Meeting!

Dr. Traver has graciously volunteered his time and talents for many sessions and events at the ISEH Annual Scientific Meeting. You'll find him:

- Giving the keynote speech and judging posters at the Pre-Meeting Workshop for new investigators.
- Delivering the closing keynote presentation in the McCulloch & Till Award Lecture.
- Meeting with new investigators as one of 11 renowned experts at the New Investigator's Meet the Exper Mixer.
- Mingling at the welcome reception, poster sessions, and social event!

But hurry - most of these popular events require preregistration and space is limited! So REGISTER NOW!

How are hematopoietic stem cells (HSCs) born during embryonic development? Every year we learn more and more regarding the genetic inputs and cellular interactions needed to form HSCs. Yet, this process that occurs in the embryo cannot be replicated in vitro from pluripotent stem cells. So, we still have a great deal to learn regarding how the known signals are integrated into the precursors of HSCs to enable their formation.

Maintaining a consistent stream of funding. It seems that funding is often either feast or famine, with either option being fairly arbitrary. I hope we can improve the system in the U.S. to better link a laboratory's track record with grant success.

I think motivation and curiosity are key traits of a successful scientist at any level. It is also a privilege to be surrounded by intelligent and collegial people every day.

Despite the training required and challenges faced, being a scientist is a wonderful thing. It is one of the few jobs where you can literally do what you want and follow your interests without anyone else telling you what to do. It is also a job of mitigating failure, from daily experimental outcomes to grant and paper rejections, so one must celebrate the successes that arise. Along these same lines, Gerry Crabtree, a celebrated professor at Stanford once told me, "You should always have a tan". I've been trying to follow this advice ever since.

What do you enjoy doing, apart from science?

I think I've been able to achieve a healthy work / life balance. When I'm not in the lab, I'm with my family eating good food and exploring the world. I also love being outside, whether its hiking, camping, fishing or just sitting on the beach.