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F.-Ulrich Hartl inducted into Hall of Fame of German Research

F.-Ulrich Hartl, director at the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry in Martinsried, was inducted into the Hall of Fame of German Research. The award, which was introduced by the Manager Magazin in 2009, honors Hartl as a pioneer in the field of cellular biochemistry. Together with colleagues in the USA, Hartl demonstrated that newly produced proteins do not fold spontaneously but require the assistance by folding helpers, so called chaperones. This finding refuted the central dogma that proteins in cells can fold spontaneously, just as they do in the test tube. Hartl's research shows that misfolded proteins contribute to neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease and are associated with malfunction of chaperones.

Proteins, small molecular machines within each cell, take over a variety of tasks. Newly produced immature chain-like proteins have to fold into a specific, three-dimensional structure. In the eighties, Hartl and colleagues proved that proteins do not fold spontaneously. Rather, they need assistance in their folding process by so-called chaperones. At the time, this finding contradicted the common opinion.

The scientists discovered that certain chaperones are cage-like 'folding machines'. They offer a protected environment to newly produced proteins, allowing them to fold into their correct functional structure. Misfolded proteins are one of the main causes of severe neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's disease or Parkinson's disease. Furthermore, protein misfolding plays an essential role in aging.

The Manager Magazin created the Hall of Fame of German Research to honor scientists, whose achievements have advanced Germany as a center of research and economy. The award was announced in a festive event with representatives from science, economy and politics and Darmstadt. The first Secretary General of the European Research Council (ERC) Ernst-Ludwig



MAX-PLANCK-GESELLSCHAFT



Winnacker, who is also an external scientific member of the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry, gave the laudatory speech for Hartl. After Feodor Lynen as a historic laureate and Axel Ullrich in 2012, Hartl is the third awardee from the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry.

About F.-Ulrich Hartl

Ulrich Hartl was born in 1957. He studied Medicine at the University of Heidelberg, where he afterwards gained his PhD. Hartl joined Walter Neupert's research group at LMU as a postdoc and then became a group leader in Neupert's department. A fellowship from the German Research Foundation (DFG) enabled him to undertake research at the University of California, Los Angeles. He did research as professor and Howard Hughes Medical Investigator at the Sloan Kettering Institute and at Cornell University in New York, USA. In 1997, the Max Planck Society succeeded in enticing the renowned scientist back to Germany. Since then, he is Director and head of the Department of Cellular Biochemistry at the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry. Within the last years he was honored with multiple scientific prizes including 2002 the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize, 2011 the Albert Lasker Award for Basic Medical Research, 2012 the Shaw Prize together with Horwich and 2016 the Albany Medical Center-Prize together with Horwich and Susan Lee Lindquist.

About the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry

The Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry (MPIB) belongs to the Max Planck Society, an independent, non-profit research organization dedicated to top level basic research. As one of the largest Institutes of the Max Planck Society, 850 employees from 45 nations work here in the field of life sciences. In currently eight departments and about 25 research groups, the scientists contribute to the newest findings in the areas of biochemistry, cell biology, structural biology, biophysics and molecular science. The MPIB in Munich-Martinsried is part of the local life-science-campus where two Max Planck Institutes, a Helmholtz Center, the Gene-Center, several bio-medical faculties of two Munich universities and several biotech-companies are located in close proximity.

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Caption:

Hall of Fame of German Research Award 2018, Manager Magazin and Merck
From left: Barbara M. Gruener, Martin Noe, F.-Ulrich Hartl, Stefan Oschmann, Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker, Sascha Fahl.

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