



THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
IMMUNOLOGISTS

Remarks of AAI President Marc Jenkins, Ph.D.

25th Anniversary Celebration of AAI Public Affairs

Saturday, May 2, 2014

Welcome, everyone, and thanks for joining us for this 25th anniversary celebration of the AAI public affairs program.

What started with a handful of hopeful AAI members a quarter century ago has evolved into a sophisticated and deliberate program which now involves not only about three dozen AAI members, including the very dedicated members of the Committee on Public Affairs, and two professional staff, but also hundreds of AAI members who speak up for what science needs to flourish.

We know how hard you all work, and we know the very important issues that are at stake. We appreciate that you have long advocated for increased, predictable funding for NIH. From the early years through today, you have addressed issues including the NIH budget doubling, the infusion of stimulus funding, cuts from sequestration, and the ongoing budget erosion caused by biomedical research inflation. And you have explained clearly and cogently what we, as scientists, need in order to do our work and ensure a robust biomedical research enterprise.

We also know that one of your most recent fights – and it was an aggressive one - was over the loss of the A2 application. So we were all relieved – and happy - to see, just a week ago, a new solution from NIH to a serious problem that has really been devastating our community.

Beyond the many bread and butter policy issues, we know you have worked diligently and creatively to involve more AAI members in public affairs – with increased Hill visits; our new Public Policy Fellows Program for early career scientists, and ongoing dialogue with leaders at NIH and other federal agencies.

And from what I can tell, you seem to have a lot of fun doing what you do. The line of people volunteering to serve AAI public affairs is a long one, and it is filled with dedicated members who find the time and energy to care and to help. For this, and on behalf of all AAI members, I thank you, wish you all the best, and hope you enjoy this marvelous celebration tonight.