Annual Report of Distinguished Physiologists Committee

Five senior physiologists (Drs. William Dantzler, Frank Knox, David Osborne, Philip Posner and Margaret Anderson) comprised the Senior Physiology Committee in 2011. One of the primary duties of each Committee member is to “develop and maintain liaison with emeritus members and members about to retire”. This liaison is accomplished by submitting, on behalf of the Society, a personal 70th, 80th, 90th, or 100th birthday greeting. Thus, each committee member makes about three dozen mailings in the course of the year. Each greeting includes an invitation for the senior recipient to inform APS about his or her current activities, interests and whereabouts, and requests “words of wisdom” for younger colleagues. The historical and philosophical commentaries evoked by this invitation provide the material subsequently published in “Senior Physiologist’s News” in each issue of *The Physiologist*. By the end of 2011, the Senior Physiologist Committee members sent birthday wishes to 131 members reaching age 70, to 56 members reaching age 80, 26 members reaching age 90, and to four members reaching the age of 100! Fourteen response letters were received and published in *The Physiologist*.

Responses from recipients of these birthday greetings are extremely positive and enthusiastic. Whether retired or still working in their labs, the majority of seniors obviously retain their passion for science. They express in innumerable ways how fulfilling they have found life and how important APS has been during their careers.

Another responsibility of the Senior Physiologists Committee is to review applications and recommend to Council the annual awardees of the $500 G. Edgar Folk, Jr., Senior Physiologists Award. This award is designed to support the scientific activities of a senior member. In 2011, one award was made to George Tanner to help defray costs associated with attendance at two international meetings and expenses associated with preparing new Power Point slides for two invited talks.

At their spring 2012 meeting, the APS Council discussed ways to encourage more members to self-nominate for membership on this Committee. The Council approved a motion to change the name of the committee to the “Distinguished Physiologists Committee” in hopes of encouraging more applications. The new name is now being used.