



Newsletter No. 86

Doreen J. Putrah Cancer Research Foundation and the
Availability of Travel Fellowships to Attend Scientific Meetings

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Every two years the ISEBTT organizes the World Congress on Electroporation and Pulsed Electric Fields in Biology, Medicine Food and Environmental Technologies. These congresses would not be possible without the generous sponsor support. One sponsor has been extremely generous in providing travel grants for students, post-doctoral fellows and early-stage researchers. Without this support many of these young researchers would not be able to attend this important meeting. The Doreen J. Putrah Cancer Research Foundation has been providing approximately 25 travel grants for young researchers to attend the World Congress on Electroporation.

Bob Lovgren is the executive director of the Doreen J. Putrah Cancer Research Foundation. Doreen was his wife who unfortunately passed away from cancer. One of the last things she said to Bob was "Bob there is nothing you can do about this". Of course, she was right. What could he do? One thing that occurred to him was that he could start this foundation. He wanted a means to learn more about cancer and especially cancer research. He also thought he could possibly fuel cancer research and encourage young people to work in this field.

While Bob has a great interest in supporting research, he is not a scientist, nor does he have any kind of formal science background. Because of this, he has done a great deal of reading on cancer research. In addition, he attends conferences and meetings of cancer research organizations. At the poster sections, he has conversations with young people about their work and their research interests. This led him to begin to question these young researchers as to what support they received to attend this conference. Invariably, they would say that they had paid for the travel expense themselves. As you all well know there is little funding available in grants for travel expense to conferences. With this information, Bob knew that he had found something he could do. He started programs to award Travel Fellowships to young researchers to attend conferences.

One area that has intrigued Bob is the use of pulsed electric fields (electroporation). His interest in this area originated from a presentation that he heard by Dr. Karl Schoenbach. The presentation highlighted the potential for this technology to have an impact on how cancer can be treated. Based on this, Bob looked further into the use of electroporation, and he became more incentivized to help young researchers in this area of research. After attending the 2nd World Congress on Electroporation, he saw the excitement of those working in this field and the many young researchers that were presenting their results. Thus, he decided, to award Travel Fellowships to attend subsequent World Congresses.

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**9th School on Pulsed Electric Field
Applications in Food and Biotechnology**
Vienna, Austria 4 – 8 September, 2023



International Society
for Electroporation-Based
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Bob has made these fellowships available to the ISEBTT for the past four years and plans to continue to make funds available for young researchers to attend the World Congress on Electroporation. He has also given fellowships to other organizations that are involved in cancer research. In exchange for receiving the Travel Fellowship, he asks that the recipients send a short note telling him about their experience at the conference and how the fellowship helped them attend the conference. The letters that he has received always say that it was an experience of a lifetime, and it was extremely helpful to enable them to attend the conference. They would also thank the foundation for the support.

Bob actually looks at this experience as “the thanks goes both ways”. He feels it important to also thank these young researchers. They have each made a decision in their lives to do research and to work on finding ways to help others. He feels he is just providing them with some money, but they are working hard to find ways to fight a devastating disease. When he reads these short notes, he feels that he has done something right.

As mentioned above, in addition to providing these Travel Fellowships to attend the World Congress on Electroporation, Bob also provides these fellowships to attend other conferences and meetings. One of these other meetings is the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR). He would like to see more presentations on PEF technologies at AACR. As such, he is announcing these fellowships to our community to encourage young researchers working in PEF to attend the AACR meeting. The 2024 meeting will be held in San Diego, CA, April 5-10 and abstract deadline is typically early November. If you plan on attending, send your abstract and information to rheller@usf.edu. The eligibility requirements for the fellowship are the same as with the ISEBTT World Congress. If you would like additional information, send an email to rheller@usf.edu.

For those who would like to find out more, Bob also does a TV show about basic and clinical research mostly about cancer. On this show he usually interviews grad students and post docs.

Forthcoming events

9th School on Pulsed Electric Field Applications in Food and Biotechnology

Vienna, September 4 – 8, 2023

<https://pefschool2023.electroporation.net>

International symposium “The legacy and the spirit of Lojze Vodovnik”

on-site and on-line, September 6, 2023

<https://tinyurl.com/vodovnik-symposium>

16th International Bioelectrics Symposium (BIOELECTRICS 2023)

Lisbon, September 10 – 13, 2023

<https://bioelectrics2023.pt>

17th interdisciplinary postgraduate course and international workshop Electroporation Based Technologies and Treatments (EBTT)

Ljubljana, November 12 – 18, 2023 (on-site and on-line event)

<https://2023.ebtt.org>

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A group photo of the recipients – those present at the closing ceremony – of the Doreen J. Putrah travel grant in Toulouse at the 3rd World Congress.

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