

9th February, 2004

AVENTIS PRIZES FOR SCIENCE BOOKS ANNOUNCES JUDGES FOR 2004

www.aventisprizes.com

Winners Announced: 14 June 2004

The Royal Society has today announced the General and Junior judging panels for its 2004 Aventis Prizes, which celebrate the best in popular science writing for adults and children.

The judges for the General Prize are:

Professor Robert Winston, *Professor of Fertility Studies at Imperial College London and broadcaster (chair)*

Terry Pratchett, *author*

Dr Sunetra Gupta, *reader in epidemiology at The University of Oxford and author*

Dr Daniel Glaser, *neuroscientist at University College London and former scientist in residence at the Institute of Contemporary Arts*

Emma Read, *commissioning editor for Discovery Channel Europe*

The judges for the Junior Prize are:

Kate Heavenor, *presenter of Eureka TV on CBBC (chair)*

Jacqueline Wilson, *children's author*

Professor Heinz Wolff, *television presenter and Professor of Bioengineering at Brunel University*

Abdul-Hayee Murshad, *deputy head teacher of Hermitage Primary School, London*

Mark Evans, *veterinarian and TV Presenter of Garden Invaders on BBC TV*

Professor Robert Winston comments: 'I am delighted to be chairing the judging panel this year for the Aventis Prizes, the book awards with the greatest prestige for the scientific community. They provide an invaluable contribution to the development and promotion of science books and highlight the importance of continuing scientific research into the world that we live in. I look forward to discussing the vast number of entries this year with my fellow judges.'

The Junior Prize is awarded to the best book written for under-14s and for the third year running, the Aventis Prizes have teamed up with SciZmic, the national network for science clubs. Children aged up to 14 from 60 science clubs around the country, will be selecting the winner, from a shortlist selected by the Junior Prize judging panel.

Stephen Cox, Executive Secretary of the Royal Society, says: 'The Aventis Prizes are the greatest reward - both nationally and internationally - that any science author can receive. They are presented to books that both excite and stimulate an interest in science amongst adults and children and have made a major contribution to the popularity of science books. We are grateful that the Aventis Foundation has committed to support the Prizes for the next three years and to work with us to make them internationally renowned. I am also delighted such an exceptional calibre of people have agreed to be our judges this year. I am sure they will bring a fresh and varied perspective to the Prizes.'

The Aventis Prizes are managed by The Royal Society, the UK national academy of science, and generously supported by the Aventis Foundation, a German charitable trust established by Aventis, a world leader in pharmaceuticals.

Last year's General Prize was won by Chris McManus for his book, **Right Hand, Left Hand**, an investigation into our lop-sided universe. The Junior Prize was awarded to Dr. Frances Dipper for his book, **DK Guide to the Oceans**. Other previous winners include Stephen Hawking, Robert Kunzig and Stephen Jay Gould.

The winning authors of the Junior and General Prize will receive £10,000 whilst £1,000 will be awarded to each of the shortlisted authors. The winners will be announced at a ceremony at The Royal Society in London on 14 June 2004.

Notes to Editors

The judges are available for interview and biographies are attached

About The Royal Society

The Royal Society is an independent academy promoting the natural and applied sciences. Founded in 1660, the Society has three roles, as the UK academy of science, as a learned Society and as a funding agency. It responds to individual demand with selection by merit not by field. The Society's aims are to:

- strengthen UK science by providing support to excellent individuals
- fund excellent research to push back the frontiers of knowledge
- attract and retain the best scientists
- ensure the UK engages with the best science around the world
- support science communication and education; and communicate and encourage dialogue with the public
- provide the best independent advice nationally and internationally
- promote scholarship and encourage research into the history of science
- For more information, visit the web site at www.royalsoc.ac.uk

About The Aventis Foundation

The Aventis Foundation is generously supporting the Aventis Prizes for Science Books.

The Aventis Foundation (www.aventis-foundation.org) is a German charitable trust established by Aventis, a world leader in pharmaceuticals. The Aventis Foundation serves to promote music, theater, art and literature, projects in the social and political arena with a focus on healthcare, as well as science, research and higher education. It was established in 1996 as the Hoechst Foundation and was renamed the Aventis Foundation in 2000, following the merger of Hoechst, its founder, with Rhône-Poulenc which created Aventis. Aventis is a global pharmaceutical company that discovers, develops, markets and manufactures branded prescription drugs and human vaccines to protect and improve the quality of life of patients around the world. For more information visit the website at www.aventis-foundation.org and www.aventis.co.uk

For further information, please contact Anika Birchall or Sharonne Durkin at MacLaurin on tel: 020 7471 6844 / 893 or email: aventisprizes@maclaurin.com

Aventis Prizes For Science Books Judges 2004

General Prize Judges:

Professor Robert Winston (*chair*)

Robert Winston is Professor of Fertility Studies at Imperial College London and is one of the UK's foremost science broadcasters. Robert has presented several television series' including *Child of our Time*, *Human Instinct* and *Walking with Cavemen*.

Terry Pratchett

Terry Pratchett is regarded as one of the most significant contemporary English-language satirists. He received the British Fantasy Award for best novel *Pyramids* and in 1989, was named an Officer of the British Empire "for services to literature" in the Queen's Birthday Honours of 1998. His acclaimed novels have sold more than 21 million copies worldwide and have been translated into 27 languages.

Dr Sunetra Gupta

Dr Sunetra Gupta is reader in epidemiology at Oxford University and author of four novels: *Memories of Rain*, *The Glassblowers Breath*, *Moonlight into Marzipan* and *A Sin of Colour*. *Memories of Rain* received the 1997 Award for Fiction in English from the Indian Academy of Letters, and *A Sin of Colour* won the Southern Arts Prize in 1999, and appeared on the longlist for the Orange Prize For Fiction in 2000.

Dr Daniel Glaser

Dr Daniel Glaser is based at the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, University College London. He has just finished as one of the Institute of Contemporary Art's first ever Scientists in Residence where he chaired numerous ICA *Café Scientifique* discussions.

Emma Read

Emma Read is commissioning editor for Discovery Channel Europe. She has spoken about science at a number of forums including the 2003 Edinburgh International Festival of Science.

Junior Prize Judges:

Kate Heavenor (*chair*)

Kate Heavenor is the presenter of *Eureka TV* on CBBC (Children's BBC). She studied contemporary theatre practice at The Royal Academy of Music and Drama before joining the BBC to present a number of children's programmes including *Fully Booked*, *Hyperlinks* and *Fbi*.

Jacqueline Wilson

Second only to J K Rowling in sales, over eight million copies of Jacqueline Wilson's award-winning books have now been sold in the UK alone and her books for children have been translated into 23 different languages. Indeed, during the year 2000, she wrote six of the top ten best selling children's paperbacks in the UK.

Abdul-Hayee Murshad

Abdul-Hayee Murshad is deputy head teacher of the Hermitage Primary School in London's Tower Hamlets. Abdul is a Royal Society Partnership Grant holder – the Partnership Grants being a scheme initiated by The Royal Society in which teachers work with practising scientists and engineers to bring exciting science projects to the classroom.

Professor Heinz Wolff

Professor Heinz Wolff is perhaps best known by the public for a number of television series, such as *Young Scientist of the Year*, *the Great Egg Race* and *Great Experiments Which Changed the World*. In 1983, he founded the Brunel Institute for Bioengineering. He has also received Honorary Doctorates from the Open University, De Montford, Middlesex and Oxford Brookes universities, as well as an Honorary fellowship from The Royal College of Physicians. His personal interests range from the invention of high technology devices to the widespread and sensible application of technology to the problems of the elderly and disabled.

Mark Evans

Mark Evans qualified from the Royal Veterinary College in 1987. He started a career as a presenter ten years ago. He has now presented over 200 hours of network television programmes including *Garden Invaders* as well as hosting a variety of gardening and DIY shows. Mark has also fronted a television series building his own super-car, and another constructing and flying his own two-seater, 200mph plane.