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HILDE CHEROUTRE WINS NIH PIONEER AWARD

Hilde Cheroutre, a Belgian scientist at the La Jolla Institute for Allergy & Immunology, has received one of the National Institutes of Health (NIH)'s top awards -- the 2009 NIH Director's Pioneer Award. The prestigious prize carries with it funding for total costs of up to \$4.7 million over five years, and is designed to support the work of exceptionally creative scientists, whose novel proposals offer the potential to make extraordinary contributions to human health.



Hilde Cheroutre

Dr. Cheroutre received the award during the Pioneer Award Symposium at the NIH headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland, on September 24. Dr. Cheroutre is one of a select group of 18 scientists nationwide chosen for the 2009 prize from among more than 2,300 applicants. The award will fund her innovative research proposal that, if successful, would create a new way of detecting, treating and possibly preventing autoimmune diseases, with the potential for identifying high risk for autoimmunity in newborns.

If Dr. Cheroutre's premise is correct and she proves that certain cellular defects underlie autoimmunity, it could allow for early detection of those individuals at high risk. The second part of her groundbreaking proposal would then come into play through the development of new therapies that could potentially prevent autoimmunity in those people identified as highly susceptible. Theoretically, similar treatments could also be used for those who have already developed autoimmunity.

Nilabh Shastri, Ph.D., a prominent scientist and immunology professor at UC Berkeley, who previously worked with Dr. Cheroutre, said her selection "justifies the existence of such awards."

"Dr. Cheroutre possesses a remarkable and rare combination of abilities which have allowed her to make seminal research contributions," said Dr. Shastri, noting that Dr. Cheroutre's previous discoveries have opened up novel avenues of research on the molecular mechanisms of immunological memory, regulatory T cells and autoimmunity. "She not only questions dogmas, but also designs appropriate experiments and has the persistence to carry through until the problems are resolved. She is simply one of the best."

AMBASSADOR ATTENDS SAINT DAMIEN CEREMONIES IN HONOLULU

Ambassador Jan Matthysen visited Honolulu on November 1 to attend ceremonies marking the installation of a relic of the recently canonized Saint Damien in the Hawaiian capital's Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace. The Ambassador attended a special Mass at the Cathedral, concelebrated by Belgian Cardinal Godfried Danneels, Honolulu Bishop Larry Silva and 11 other bishops, and spoke at an Interfaith Civic Ceremony held later in the day at Iolani Palace.

"The affection for Father Damien is one of the strongest bonds in the long friendship between Belgium and the United States," the Ambassador said. "I am very honored that I was able to go to Honolulu at the request of my Government to reinforce the message that we Belgians cherish our special connection with the State of Hawaii."

On October 11, Pope Benedict XVI canonized Father Damien at the Vatican, recognizing the Belgian priest's courageous work with leprosy patients in Hawaii. During the ceremony, Bishop Larry Silva of Honolulu was presented with a holy relic, to be given to the Catholics of Hawaii for custody and veneration. An itinerary set up by the Diocese of Honolulu for the relic's travel from Rome to Honolulu included stops in Detroit, San Francisco, and Oakland, and several of the Hawaiian islands. Its final destination—the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace—was where Father Damien was ordained to the priesthood in 1864.

STROBE TALBOTT DECORATED

On October 27, Ambassador Jan Matthysen presented a Belgian decoration, Grand Officer in the Order of the Crown, to Strobe Talbott, President of the Brookings Institution. The distinction was bestowed by His Majesty King Albert, King of the Belgians. The ceremony took place at the Belgian Residence, in front of an audience of the honoree's colleagues, family and friends, and included a performance of movements from Bach's *Concerto in D Minor for 2 Violins*.

Ambassador Matthysen cited Belgium's appreciation for the former Deputy Secretary of State, former Ambassador-at-Large, journalist and author. "Over many years Strobe Talbott has been for Belgian diplomacy and its representatives in Washington, as well as in Brussels, an inspiring and extremely helpful colleague...Empathy, precision, logical rationality and clear formulations are what we want to honor and what we admire in this exceptional American and Citizen of the World."

In accepting the decoration, Talbott reminisced about visits to Belgium and spoke of the centrality of Brussels in what he considers "the greatest political experiment of our era"—the creation of the European Union.

65th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

For information on activities in Belgium planned in commemoration of the Battle of the Bulge — including exhibitions, parades of military vehicles, visits to battlefields, commemorative walks, concerts by the U.S. Air Force Band, fireworks, etc. — please visit <http://www.luxembourg-tourisme.be/en/> and click on 'Battle of the Bulge.'

WILFRIED MARTENS PRESENTS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Nine-time Belgian Prime Minister and current President of the European People's Party, Wilfried Martens presented his new autobiography, *Europe: I Struggle, I Overcome*, at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars on October 9.

The book focuses on his strong commitment to European integration. Martens offers insight into the running of a complex country like Belgium as well as the fight for European integration and unification, and provides a firsthand account of the intricacies of European politics.

Ambassador Jan Matthysen was present at the event, and thanked Wilfried Martens for his statesmanship as well as for his written "contribution to democracy and history." The Ambassador emphasized that this autobiography is testimony to the importance of transatlantic relations, in a world where only twenty percent of the population lives in a democracy as we know it.

NEWTREE CHOCOLATE AVAILABLE AT WAL-MART

Good news for chocolate lovers: Belgian chocolate producer Newtree negotiated a deal with Wal-Mart to provide eight types of chocolate bars for the new chocolate division in the 1,860 Wal-Mart stores in the U.S. The chocolate bars will feature Newtree's unique flavors, such as apricot, mint, ginger, lavender, and cherry.

Newtree has stated that it has never wanted to target the luxury chocolate market; instead it wants good chocolate to be available for everybody. This is what propelled Benoit de Bruyn, a biochemist with a passion for chocolate, to found Newtree in 2001. His team of chocolatiers and nutritionists unite science with the art and romance of chocolate-making. The company name, Newtree, reflects a new approach to chocolate-making that includes the use of natural plants and ingredients. Newtree is committed to creating products that are natural and GMO-free. All Newtree dark chocolates contain 73% cocoa content. Its products are manufactured and packaged in Belgium.

Newtree America was established in 2003 to introduce Newtree to North America. Newtree's sales in the U.S. were badly hit by the economic crisis, especially in the specialty stores which saw a 30% decline in customers. Wal-Mart's decision to create a quality chocolate division in its stores, and its offer to Newtree came at exactly the right time. The April issue of *O, The Oprah Magazine* contained a flattering article about Newtree: Oprah Winfrey had discovered the chocolates in a Las Vegas hotel which is one of Newtree's clients.

Because of Wal-Mart's name in the retail sector, the deal is a reference for Newtree in negotiating with other retailers. Another deal in France was quickly reached after the Wal-Mart deal became public. Newtree's turnover increased by 15% in 2008 to about 5 million euros. The company is hoping for a similar increase this year.

VLERICK MBA 10th IN MAJOR RANKING US AMBASSADOR TO GIVE KEYNOTE

In its latest comparison of full-time MBA programs, *The Economist* rated the Belgium-based *Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School* number 10 in the world. This represents a further improvement on the school's position last year, when it took 14th place. The school has shown a remarkable rise in the rankings over the last four years, overtaking many prestigious business schools in the US and Europe. Vlerick also improved its ranking in the European full-time MBA table, going from number 6 in 2008 up to 4th position this year, just behind Spain's IESE, IMD in Switzerland and London Business School.

Dean Philippe Haspeslagh comments: "Whereas the *Financial Times* ranking emphasizes salary figures, this *Economist* ranking focuses on the experience of students in the program and their ability to prosper in a number of ways after graduating. Let's keep this result in perspective and conclude that, thanks to great staff, faculty and students, the Vlerick MBA has again achieved a place amongst the very top international MBA offerings."

One of the many areas where the School scored highly is what the ranking calls 'Potential to network' - the ability of students and graduates to call upon an extensive, well connected and available alumni community.

Another point of interest is the rise in international applicants to European schools and the increased presence of European schools in the top 20 of the global table. Half are now from outside of the USA. With its increased international profile, Vlerick is seeing a record number of international applicants. The MBA entering class of 2009 comprises 40 nationalities, which offers some of the greatest diversity among international MBA-programs. Nine of the current eighty-eight fulltime MBA students are American citizens.

Peter Rafferty, International Development Director at Vlerick Leuven Management School: "This result is a tribute to the advantages of an extremely personal yet highly diverse program with excellent teaching, student liaison and careers services. We have a very competitive return on investment due, in part, to our comparatively low tuition costs and as a result we had twice as many applications for the full time MBA this year which has led to a doubling of this year's intake. We are confident that all this will fuel even greater success in the coming years."

The continued success of the Vlerick School has not passed unnoticed for American eyes either. On December 14th, Howard Gutman, the American Ambassador to Belgium, will give the keynote address at the school's yearly "Winter Reunion," which will take place at the International Congress Center in Ghent.

BELGIUM SAYS "THANK YOU!" TO AMERICAN "ROSIES"

Belgium has expressed its gratitude to American women who worked on the home front defense industry during World War II. These women are known collectively as "Rosie the Riveters," thanks to a song by that name which became very popular during the war.

In September, the Embassy was contacted by the West Virginia-based non-profit organization "Thanks! Plain and Simple," which guides veterans and the public to work together. Executive Director and Founder Anne Montague invited Belgium to be the first foreign nation to acknowledge the Rosies.

Ambassador Matthysen immediately sent the group a letter stating that the Rosies' contributions to the war effort had certainly earned them a place among the heroes that Belgium will never forget. He also commended West Virginia's plan to record the women's accounts of their wartime work. So far, "Thanks! Plain and Simple" has identified nearly 100 Rosies, videotaped at least 20 and started a state-wide collection of their stories.

Belgium's message of appreciation will be reinforced in November, when Lt. Col. Martine Dierckx, the Embassy's Assistant Defense Attaché, will participate in a program honoring the Rosies in Martinsburg, West Virginia. She will meet several Rosies and speak about the importance of recognizing their work. The audience is expected to include Donnaleen Linktree, President of the American Rosie the Riveter Association, who is the daughter of a Belgian Rosie who worked at the converted Ford plant near Detroit, and Mr. Tom Leatherman, Deputy Superintendent, Rosie the Riveter /World War II Home Front National Historical Park, located in Richmond, California.

AMERICANS LOVE BRUGES

The well respected American travel magazine *Condé Nast Traveler* has ranked the Belgian city of Bruges as



Philip Vanoutrive ©MAE/MBZ

the seventh most beautiful city in the world. In a poll based on the opinion of 25,000 readers, Bruges equals Paris and finishes just behind Vienna. The mayor of Bruges, Patrick Moenaert, is very satisfied about the result: "I think it is fantastic to see that Bruges scores so well again."

Condé Nast Traveler is not the only publication to strongly encourage a visit to Bruges. On October 24, the American edition of the *Financial Times* published a comprehensive article entitled *The fairytale beauty of Bruges*. This article not only describes how beautiful the city is, but also states that "despite its many visitors, Bruges doesn't feel overwhelmed or exploited. There may be legion shops selling lace and chocolates but there's no litter, no Starbucks, indeed few global brands. Rather, it's a place of modest family businesses determined to keep alive 1,000 years of history. Which, combined with the fact that most of the 3m who visit annually come by rail or road, suggests this may be tourism at its most sustaining and sustainable."

HELP PRESERVE BELGIUM'S RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE

With the help of private donors, the Cultural Heritage Fund of the King Baudouin Foundation is able to purchase important works of art that showcase Belgium's great artistic tradition. These works are entrusted to well-known museums in every part of the country, in an effort to bring them to a broader audience and preserve them for future generations.

Gifts received last year from our friends in the United States enabled the Cultural Heritage Fund to acquire an exceptional ring created by Henry van de Velde in 1899. This extraordinary piece is already on view at the Royal Museums for Art and History in Brussels. You may wish to download a presentation booklet with additional examples of recent acquisitions from our website (Go to www.kbfus.org, then click on 'News').

We invite you to join the King Baudouin Foundation's efforts to preserve Belgium's rich cultural heritage:

To contribute by check: Write your check to KBFUS, write "Cultural Heritage Fund" in the memo section of the check, and send it to: King Baudouin Foundation United States (KBFUS), 10 Rockefeller Plaza, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10020.

To contribute by credit card: Go to www.kbfus.org, click on the 'Donate Now' button at the left of the home page, and select 'Giving Option 0: Cultural Heritage Fund'.

Your donation to KBFUS will go directly toward new acquisitions. Because KBFUS is a 501(c)(3) public charity, you can claim maximum tax benefits for your contribution.

Ring by Henry van de Velde, 1899



Acquired by the Cultural Heritage Fund in 2009, with the support of friends in the United States. Entrusted to the Royal Museums for Art and History, Brussels.

Jewels created by Henry van de Velde are extremely rare. This exceptional piece was commissioned by Raphaël Petrucci as a gift for his wife, Claire Verwee, to mark the birth of their daughter Clairette, who would later become Madame Marcel Wolfers. Henry van de Velde applied the principle of a 180° rotation: The diamond acts as a central point towards which opposite movements converge, giving the ring its fascinating movement. The purchase was made possible thanks to the generous support of donors in the United States.

EVENTS OF INTEREST

Through January 4 — Columbus, OH

Major retrospective of paintings by Luc Tuymans, at the Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University. 415 357-4172

Through January 18 — Washington, DC

Exhibition of drawings and prints *The Darker Side of Light: Arts of Privacy, 1850-1900* includes works by Ensor, Rops and Khnopff, at the National Gallery of Art. www.nga.gov

November 5-24 — Silver Spring, MD

AFI European Union Film Showcase will feature new films from the EU. For full schedule please visit www.afi.com/silver

November 7-22 — Washington DC

Karin Borghouts will represent Belgium in the photography exhibition *What Lies Beneath: Nature and Urban Landscape*, featuring one photographer from each of twenty EU member states, at the House of Sweden. www.swedenabroad.com

November 7 - December 31 — Washington, DC

Conceptual artist Koen Vanmechelen's *Cosmopolitan Chicken Project*, featuring live chickens and including taxidermy and blown-glass sculptures, video, photography, paintings and drawings, at Conner Contemporary Art www.connercontemporary.com

November 16 — Washington, DC

Former Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt will present his latest book, *The Financial Crisis: How Europe Can Save the World*, at the German Marshall Fund. www.gmfus.org

December 5 — Washington, DC

Recital by pianist Plamena Mangova, 2nd prize winner 2007 Queen Elisabeth Competition, at the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater. www.kennedy-center.org

December 8 — Washington, DC

Recital by violinist Ray Chen, 1st prize winner 2009 Queen Elisabeth Competition, at the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater. www.kennedy-center.org

SPORTS UPDATE

Kim Clijsters, who in a spectacular comeback after two years in retirement won the U.S. Open in New York this summer, will play all four Grand Slams in 2010, the Fed Cup and a half dozen other tournaments.

Jacques Rogge has been re-elected president of the International Olympic Committee. The Ghent-born Rogge, 67, will serve through the London 2012 Olympics.

Cyclist **Frank Vandenbroucke**, age 34, died of a pulmonary embolism on October 12 while in Senegal.

Three hundred Belgians participated in the **New York City Marathon** on November 1, including the Embassy's own Jeroen Cooreman (4:13:12) and Filip Vanden Bulcke, Belgian Mission to the UN, (3:40:32).

NOTEWORTHY IN THE CULINARY CORNER

Luc Dendievel has been appointed Executive Chef at the Willard InterContinental Hotel in Washington, DC. Dendievel has been in the U.S. for twenty years and moved to Washington after a successful stint at Waterloo Brasserie in New York

Congratulations to **Rouge Tomate**, the Belgian-owned New York branch of the eponymous Avenue Louise restaurant in Brussels, which has been awarded its first Michelin Star.

Belgian waffle vendor **Thomas De Geest** has won the New York Vendy Award in the 'desserts' category. The 37-year-old Belgian, formerly a consultant at IBM, started selling waffles with toppings in the streets of the Big Apple two years ago.

At the World Chocolate Masters finals in Paris, an international jury selected "Balanced," a filled chocolate created by confectioner **Ryan Stevenson** from Ixelles, as the "best praline."

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