

# Texas Heart Institute Medal and the Ray C. Fish Award for Scientific Achievement in Cardiovascular Diseases

**R**ay C. Fish (1902–1962) was a leading figure in Houston’s natural gas industry and a philanthropist. He believed in the American dream of “opportunity for success.” The Ray C. Fish Foundation was established so that others might be encouraged to broaden man’s self-knowledge and to keep the American dream alive. After its founder’s death from heart disease, the Fish Foundation granted \$5 million to make the Texas Heart Institute a reality. For this reason, the Institute’s highest professional award is given in honor of this extraordinary man. The award recognizes those whose innovations have made significant contributions to cardiovascular medicine and surgery.

The 1st Texas Heart Institute Medal and Ray C. Fish Award for Scientific Achievement in Cardiovascular Diseases were presented in 1972 to Dr. Norman Shumway. Since 1972, 29 other highly deserving recipients have been so honored by the Institute. The complete Roll of Recipients appears on the next page.



James T. Willerson, MD

## James T. Willerson, MD

The 2009 Fish Award recipient is Dr. James T. Willerson. His research concentrates on elucidating mechanisms responsible for the conversion from stable to unstable coronary heart disease syndromes, the prevention of unstable angina and acute myocardial infarction, the detection and treatment of unstable atherosclerotic plaques, and the discovery of the genes and abnormal proteins responsible for cardiovascular disease. Dr. Willerson and his colleagues Emerson Perin and Edward T.H. Yeh have been directly involved in seminal research in the use of stem cells for the repair of hearts and cardiovascular vessels injured by myocardial infarction that led to heart failure. Drs. Willerson, Perin, and colleagues in Brazil conducted the first-ever clinical trial in which autologous stem cells were injected directly into the injured hearts of patients who were experiencing severe heart failure.

Dr. Willerson is the former chairman of the national American Heart Association Research Committee and of the National Institutes of Health Cardiovascular and Renal Study Section and was director and principal investigator of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute’s Specialized Center of Research under a major grant from the NIH. He has served 11 years as editor-in-chief of *Circulation* and 2 years as editor-in-chief of the *Texas Heart Institute Journal*; and he has served on the editorial boards of several other medical journals. He has edited or co-edited 24 textbooks, including the 3rd edition of *Cardiovascular Medicine*, and has authored or co-authored more than 870 scientific articles.

---

# ROLL OF RECIPIENTS

*of the Texas Heart Institute Medal and the Ray C. Fish Award  
for Scientific Achievement in Cardiovascular Diseases*

- |      |   |      |   |
|------|---|------|---|
| 1972 | <b>Norman E. Shumway</b><br>Cardiovascular Surgery ( <i>Heart Transplantation</i> )   | 1987 | <b>Dwight E. Harken</b><br>Cardiovascular Surgery ( <i>Intracardiac Surgery</i> )   |
| 1973 | <b>F. Mason Sones, Jr.</b><br>Cardiology ( <i>Coronary Angiography</i> )  | 1988 | <b>J. Willis Hurst</b><br>Cardiology ( <i>Writing and Teaching</i> )  |
| 1974 | <b>Eugene E. Braunwald</b><br>Physiology ( <i>Myocardial Preservation</i> )   | 1989 | <b>Robert J. Hall</b><br>Cardiology ( <i>Clinical Practice and Teaching</i> )   |
| 1975 | <b>Willem J. Kolff</b><br>Cardiovascular Surgery ( <i>Artificial Organs</i> )   | 1990 | <b>Sol Sherry</b><br>Cardiology ( <i>Thrombolytic Therapy</i> )   |
| 1976 | <b>Harvey Feigenbaum</b><br>Cardiology ( <i>Echocardiography</i> )  | 1992 | <b>Arthur S. Keats</b><br>Cardiovascular Anesthesiology   |
| 1977 | <b>John W. Kirklin</b><br>Cardiovascular Surgery ( <i>Heart-Lung Machines</i> )   | 1997 | <b>Aldo R. Castañeda</b><br>Pediatric Cardiovascular Surgery  |
| 1978 | <b>Bernard Lown</b><br>Cardiology ( <i>Cardiac Arrhythmias</i> )  | 1997 | <b>Julio C. Palmaz</b><br>Radiology ( <i>Endovascular Stents</i> )  |
| 1979 | <b>John J. Gallagher and William C. Sealy</b><br>(co-recipients)<br>Cardiology and Cardiovascular Surgery ( <i>Surgery for Pre-Excitation</i> )                     | 1998 | <b>Magdi Yacoub</b><br>Cardiovascular Surgery ( <i>Heart-Lung Transplantation</i> )   |
| 1980 | <b>W. Proctor Harvey</b><br>Cardiology ( <i>Clinical Practice and Teaching</i> )  | 1999 | <b>Thomas J. Fogarty</b><br>Cardiovascular Surgery ( <i>Medical and Surgical Devices</i> )  |
| 1981 | <b>Paul M. Zoll</b><br>Cardiology ( <i>Pacemaking</i> )   | 2004 | <b>James L. Cox</b><br>Cardiovascular Surgery ( <i>Surgery for Atrial Fibrillation</i> )  |
| 1983 | <b>Andreas R. Grüntzig</b><br>Cardiology ( <i>Percutaneous Transluminal Coronary Angioplasty</i> )  | 2004 | <b>Stephen Westaby</b><br>Cardiovascular Surgery ( <i>First Clinical Trial of Axial-Flow Devices for Destination Therapy and Significant Contributions to the Surgical Literature</i> ) |
| 1984 | <b>Hein J.J. Wellens and Douglas P. Zipes</b><br>(co-recipients)<br>Cardiology ( <i>Diagnosis and Management of Pediatric Cardiac Arrhythmias</i> )                 | 2007 | <b>Charles E. Mullins</b><br>Pediatric Cardiology ( <i>Teaching and Pioneering Work in Interventional Techniques for Congenital Heart Disease</i> )                                     |
| 1985 | <b>Denton A. Cooley</b><br>Cardiovascular Surgery ( <i>Surgery for Congenital Heart Disease, Aneurysms of the Aorta, and Implantation of the Artificial Heart</i> ) | 2008 | <b>O.H. Frazier</b><br>Cardiovascular Surgery ( <i>Heart Transplantation and Research and Development of the Left Ventricular Assist Device</i> )                                       |
| 1986 | <b>William J. Rashkind</b><br>Pediatric Cardiology ( <i>Nonsurgical Treatment of Congenital Heart Disease</i> )   | 2009 | <b>James T. Willerson</b><br>Cardiology ( <i>Pioneering Work in Unstable Atherosclerotic Plaques, Acute Coronary Syndromes, and Cardiac Stem Cells</i> )                                |