Rett Syndrome Research Trust Blog

Welcome to the RSRT Blog. RSRT is a newly formed 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization intensively focused on the development of treatments and cures for Rett Syndrome and related MECP2 disorders. The strength of the Trust is based on the guidance of founders and advisors who are largely responsible for the major advances in Rett research over the past decade.

RSRT Advisor Huda Zoghbi Receives 2009 Vilcek Prize for Biomedical Science

February 10, 2009 in Uncategorized | Tags: Dr. Huda Zoghbi, MECP2, rett syndrome, Rett Syndrome Research Trust, RSRT, Vilcek Foundation

RETT SYNDROME RESEARCH TRUST WEBSITE

By **Monica Coenraads**

The trustees, staff and volunteers of RSRT congratulate **Dr. Huda Zoghbi** on receiving the 2009 Vilcek Prize in Biomedical Science. The **Vilcek Foundation** was established in 2000 by Czechoslovakian immigrants Jan and Marica Vilcek to raise public awareness of the contributions of immigrants to the sciences, arts and culture in the United States. Dr. Zoghbi, a world renowned physician-scientist, was selected for this honor for her seminal contributions to neuroscience and genetics, including her discovery, a decade ago, that mutations in *MECP2* cause Rett Syndrome.

The Vilcek Foundation celebrates the spirit of immigrants and their will to succeed in a new country, sometimes against all odds. Dr. Zoghbi arrived in the US in 1975, escaping war-torn Beirut where she had been attending medical school. She had intended to stay for only a few months, but her parents convinced her to finish medical school in the US after her brother was injured by shrapnel.

Dr. Zoghbi and her first patient with Rett, Ashley.

Dr. Zoghbi found her way to Baylor College of Medicine where, as a neurology fellow, she saw her first patient with Rett Syndrome. She put aside her clinical practice to focus on research. After 16 years of perseverance, the Zoghbi lab succeeded in identifying the mutated gene responsible for Rett Syndrome. During the past 10 years I have witnessed Rett Syndrome go from unknown entity to high-profile disorder. This transformation is due, in large part, to the efforts of Dr. Zoghbi, who has consistently brought awareness of this disorder to the scientific community.

As the mother of a child with Rett Syndrome I am deeply grateful for Dr. Zoghbi's patience and tenacity as well as her skill. It has been my pleasure and privilege over the last decade to have worked closely with and learned so much from Dr. Zoghbi. RSRT is honored to support **her research** and to count her as a key advisor. As I watched her **video interview** on the Vilcek Foundation website Dr. Zoghbi was asked "What does your future hold?" I was not surprised by her answer: "There is one more thing I'd like to do…make a patient better."

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- Going to The Dr

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