2010 Schroth Faces of the Future Symposium to Highlight Early-Career Professionals in Virology

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The Early Career Professionals Committee, the Virology Committee, and the APS Foundation are pleased to announce the selection of four outstanding early-career professionals to speak as part of the 2010 Schroth Faces of the Future Symposium. This symposium is scheduled for Tuesday, August 10, 2010, at the APS Annual Meeting in Charlotte, NC. **Ioannis E. Tzanetakis**, **Olufemi J. Alabi**, **Anna E. Whitfield**, and **Lucy R. Stewart** were selected following a formal competition and will be awarded $400 to help support their travel to the meeting. This symposium was made possible by a generous donation from **Milt** and **Nancy Schroth**. Milt Schroth is an internationally known expert on bacterial diseases, systematics, and biocontrol.

Ioannis E. Tzanetakis

Tzanetakis is an assistant professor in the Department of Plant Pathology at the Division of Agriculture, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. He obtained his undergraduate degree in soil science and agricultural chemistry from the Agricultural University of Athens, Greece. Although a soil scientist by training, Tzanetakis was intrigued by plant pathology and was introduced to plant virology by **Panayota Kyriakopoulou**, who served as his thesis advisor. He continued his studies under **Robert Martin** and obtained a Ph.D. degree in molecular and cellular biology from Oregon State University (OSU), studying virus diseases of strawberry. After a short post-doc in the Department of Botany and Plant Pathology at OSU, studying mint viruses, he departed for his military service in Greece. He returned for another post-doc position in the Department of Microbiology at OSU, working with **Theo Dreher**, studying the function and evolution of the 3' untranslated regions of tymoviruses. He has been in his present position for two years and is working on virus epidemiology with a focus on small fruit crops. He is currently leading a multistate, multidisciplinary group, studying virus complexes in *Rubus* and is involved in the Berry Clean Plant Network. He has published 47 peer-reviewed articles and several book chapters on small fruit viruses. Tzanetakis, an APS member for 10 years, has chaired the Plant Pathogen and Disease Detection Committee, is a member of the Virology Committee, and is currently an associate editor for *Phytopathology* and *Plant Disease*.

Olufemi J. Alabi

Alabi obtained his baccalaureate degree in plant science from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, and his M.S. degree in crop protection and environmental biology from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. His M.S. research was funded through a visiting research fellowship, awarded by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Nigeria. After his M.S. degree, Alabi worked briefly at the Virology and Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory of the IITA as a research supervisor, where he was part of a team that conducted surveys in Nigeria for begomoviruses associated with cassava mosaic disease in cassava (*Manihot esculenta*). He joined the graduate program in plant pathology at Washington State University in fall 2005, under the mentorship of **Naidu A. Rayapati**. His doctoral research was funded in part by the USAID-Linkage grant through the IITA. Alabi also worked on molecular genetic analysis of *Grapevine rupestris stem pitting-associated virus* in the Pacific Northwest vineyards and molecularly characterized two new begomoviruses infecting soybeans in Nigeria. He received his doctoral degree in December 2009 for his dissertation "Studies on epidemiology, molecular detection, and genetic diversity of selected viruses infecting cassava and wine grapes." He is currently pursuing post-doctoral research in the laboratory of Rayapati at Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center, Prosser, WA. Alabi is conducting research on molecular epidemiology of closteroviruses associated with grapevine leafroll disease (GLRD) and small RNAs in grapevines affected with GLRD. He earned several awards and scholarships during his doctoral program. As an APS student education fellow, awarded by the APS Committee on the Future of Plant Pathology Education, he participated in the national summit, The Future of Education in Plant Pathology and Related Disciplines, held in Washington, DC, March 19–20, 2009. He has authored/coauthored seven peer-reviewed full-length journal articles, five disease notes, one research monograph, and a book chapter. He is a member of the Virology and Tropical Plant Pathology Committees of APS.

Whitfield is an assistant professor in the Department of Plant Pathology at Kansas State University (KSU) and an ancillary faculty member in the Department of Entomology.

Anna E. Whitfield

She obtained her bachelor's degree in biological science from the University of Georgia in 1996. She studied *Tomato spotted wilt virus* (TSWV) in ornamentals in **Diane Ullman**'s laboratory at the University of California-Davis, and she received her M.S. degree in plant pathology in 1999. For her Ph.D. studies, she studied the molecular interaction between the glycoproteins of TSWV and the thrips vector under the guidance of **Thomas German** at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A desire to learn more about vector determinants of virus transmission led Whitfield to **Saskia Hogenhout**'s lab at The Ohio State University, where she began developing genomics tools for insect vectors of rhabdoviruses. She joined the faculty at KSU in 2006. Her current research emphasis is on the biology of plant-virus-vector interactions, and the long-term goal of her research is to develop biologically based strategies for controlling viruses in agricultural croplands and greenhouses. She specializes in negative-sense RNA viruses that are transmitted in a propagative manner by arthropod vectors. Her research aims are to identify insect genes that are important for virus infection of the arthropod vectors, using a functional genomics-based approach, and develop a better understanding of virus entry and the role of viral glycoproteins in this process. Whitfield was recently awarded an NSF-CAREER grant to study the molecular mechanisms of rhabdovirus-vector interactions. She teaches graduate courses in plant virology and plant-virus-vector interactions, and she is partnering with K-12 teachers to develop plant virology and biotechnology educational tools for students and the general public.

Lucy R. Stewart

Stewart joined the USDA-ARS Corn and Soybean Research Unit, located at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) in Wooster, OH, in August 2009. She also has an adjunct assistant professor appointment in The Ohio State University Department of Plant

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Pathology. She received her B.S. degree in plant genetics and breeding from Brigham Young University in 2002. She then began graduate studies at the University of California, Davis, where she joined the laboratory of **Bryce W. Falk**. Under his mentorship, she began studying plant viruses and did her graduate research on the whitefly-transmitted *Crinivirus, Lettuce infectious yellows virus*. Her work included studies of a plasmodesmata-localized virus cytopathology and virus components involved in whitefly transmission. She was also involved in work as part of a team to develop and apply an improved reverse genetic system to assess crinivirus gene functions in planta via agroinoculation. She obtained her Ph.D. degree in plant biology in March 2009. As a research scientist for the USDA-ARS, Stewart continues work on insect-transmitted viruses, now focused on corn and soybean pathogens. Her objectives include characterization of virus genomic regions of unknown function and assessment of virus-encoded insect transmission determinants in order to better understand how viruses move between hosts and cause disease. Her current research focuses on the leafhopper-transmitted *Waikavirus*, *Maize chlorotic dwarf virus*. ■

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