

Media Release

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HISTORIC SARANAC LAKE'S SARANAC LABORATORY MUSEUM TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A MILESTONES IN MICROBIOLOGY SITE

Saranac Lake, NY, October 11, 2019 — The American Society for Microbiology designated the Saranac Laboratory as a Milestones in Microbiology Site at an official ceremony at the museum on Friday, October 11.

The Milestones in Microbiology program serves to foster interest in the nation's microbiological heritage and to remind citizens, educators and visitors of the importance of microbiology. Officials from the American Society for Microbiology attended the award ceremony, including Dr. Robin Patel, President, and Dr. Jim Poupard, Member of the ASM Milestones in Microbiology Committee. Honored guests included New York State Senator Betty Little, and representatives from the offices of Congressperson Elise Stefanik and Governor Andrew Cuomo.

"We are thrilled with this recognition," said Historic Saranac Lake Executive Director Amy Catania. "The Saranac Laboratory has been selected for this award, not only because it is a remarkable building, but also because many achievements were made here in the world of science. We are thrilled to have this plaque as a lasting statement about the importance of what happened here."

Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau founded the Saranac Laboratory in 1894 as the first facility in the United States devoted to tuberculosis (TB) research. For seven decades, studies conducted in the building and at the affiliated Trudeau Research and Clinical Laboratory at the Trudeau Sanatorium (1924) led to fundamental advances in understanding and treating TB.

In groundbreaking experiments, Trudeau established that both the bacterial pathogen, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, and the environment have roles in the development of TB. With this new knowledge, Trudeau pioneered the American Sanatorium Model as an effective means to manage the disease. The village of Saranac Lake became a center for patients of all economic and social classes seeking state-of-the-art TB treatment. The Saranac Laboratory closed in 1964. On-going experiments moved to the Trudeau Institute, where Trudeau's scientific legacy continues to inspire advances in the microbial sciences.

Following the plaque unveiling ceremony, a reception was hosted by Trudeau Institute to honor the occasion at the Hotel Saranac. The reception followed a day of seminars scheduled at the Institute that included scientists from across the United States and Canada. The 2019 Tuberculosis Symposium at Trudeau Institute was co-hosted by Dr. Brian Weinrick, Trudeau Institute Tuberculosis R&D Center Lead Investigator, Dr. William Jacobs Jr., Professor of Microbiology & Immunology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and Dr. Keith Derbyshire, Wadsworth Center, New York State Department of Health. Over fifty attendees registered for the Symposium, titled *“From Rabbit Island to Reporter Strains: Celebrating 125 years of TB research in Saranac Lake”*.

About the American Society for Microbiology

The American Society for Microbiology is the largest single life science society, composed of more than 30,000 scientists and health professionals. ASM’s mission is to promote and advance the microbial sciences.

ASM advances the microbial sciences through conferences, publications, certifications and educational opportunities. It enhances laboratory capacity around the globe through training and resources. It provides a network for scientists in academia, industry and clinical settings. Additionally, ASM promotes a deeper understanding of the microbial sciences to diverse audiences.

The ASM Milestones in Microbiology program, administered by the Center for the History of Microbiology/ASM Archives Committee, recognizes institutions and the scientists who worked there that have made significant contributions toward advancing microbiology. By placing explanatory plaques at these sites, ASM hopes to promote greater awareness and appreciation of microbiology.

About Historic Saranac Lake

Founded in 1980, Historic Saranac Lake’s mission is to preserve and share area history and architecture to build a stronger community. Historic Saranac Lake (HSL) restored the Saranac Laboratory and opened the building as a museum interpreting Saranac Lake’s unique role in history as a world-famous center for the fresh air treatment of tuberculosis. In 2019, the organization is embarking on a major museum expansion project, with the acquisition and rehabilitation of the Trudeau building.

HSL operates an innovative outreach project, the Cure Porch on Wheels, and leads a growing Oral History Project. HSL also maintains the HSL Wiki site, an innovative online encyclopedia of over 6,000 pages of local history. The organization preserves the Bartók Cabin, with tours provided upon request.

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The Saranac Laboratory, c.1894. Courtesy of the Adirondack Room of the Saranac Lake Free Library

