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Publications (/Publications) / Latest News (/Publications/Latest-News)  
/ Award for Education in Neuroscience Presented to Erik Herzog and Gönül Peker

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For immediate release

## **Award for Education in Neuroscience Presented to Erik Herzog and Gönül Peker**

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — The Society for Neuroscience (SfN) will award Erik Herzog, PhD, professor of biology at Washington University and director of the St. Louis Neuroscience Pipeline Program, and Gönül Peker, PhD, professor emeritus at Ege University, Turkey, this year's Award for Education in Neuroscience. The honor recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to neuroscience education and training and will be presented in San Diego at Neuroscience 2018, SfN's annual meeting and the world's largest source of emerging news about brain science and health.

"The Society is proud to present Dr. Herzog and Dr. Peker with this year's award," said SfN President Richard Huganir. "Dr. Herzog is a gifted teacher and science communicator who is committed to increasing diversity through mentoring, while Dr. Peker has been instrumental in demonstrating the benefits of international educational experiences and research collaborations."

Herzog's research on circadian rhythms has earned him more than 90 publications in top journals. For the past 18 years at Washington University, he has shared his passion for this area of research and neuroscience in general with his students, developing a selective and popular undergraduate neuroscience track for upper-level undergraduates majoring in biology, and his efforts to help students go far beyond the classroom. He holds or has held leadership positions with several organizations, including as president of the St. Louis SfN Chapter, chair of Neuroscience Outreach at Washington University in St. Louis, codirector of the

university's neuroscience PhD program, and president of the Society for Research on Biological Rhythms. In these positions he has worked to increase the numbers of women and people of color in the neuroscience workforce, and he gives additional time to mentor, recruit, and teach high school students — especially those from St. Louis' inner city — through outreach efforts such as his local Brain Bee, NeuroDay, and the Young Scientist Program at Washington University in St. Louis.

Like Herzog, Peker has a strong history of research — traversing neuroplasticity, neurodegeneration, neurorepair, sex and stress hormones, and neuropeptides — and through her teaching has helped to share discoveries in neuroscience and the medical sciences from and with her native Turkey. Between 1999 and 2011, she codirected the Ege Biennial International Neuroscience Graduate Summer School at Ege University. This weeklong program aims to introduce students to lectures by internationally renowned scientists from across the globe as well as to provide educational workshops and lab training. She helped to develop the master's of science and doctoral programs in medical physiology at Ege and was on the committee that established the Integrated Neuroscience Department and developed programs for master's and doctoral degrees.

Throughout her career, Peker has also founded and led several neuroscience and medical organizations. She founded and presided over the first international SfN Chapter in Turkey, was founding secretary general and past president of the Neuroscience Society of Turkey, and founded and served as vice director of the Ege University Center for Brain Research. Additionally, she was a founder and board member of the Turkish Society for Development of Medical Education, a member of the founding faculty of Turkey's first Department of Medical Education at Ege University, and a founding and elected member of the Board of Directors of the International Association of Medical Science Educators. As a member of the European Dana Alliance for the Brain, Peker has pioneered formal education on neuroethics and promoted public awareness of brain health and the benefits of brain research.

*The Society for Neuroscience (SfN) is an organization of nearly 36,000 basic scientists and clinicians who study the brain and the nervous system.*