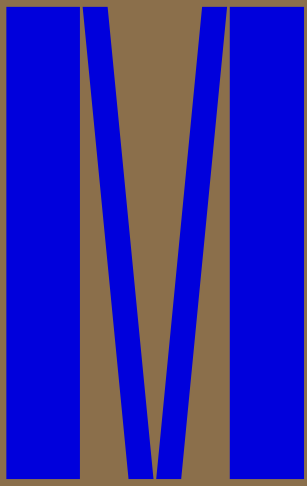
Jennifer Ruth Brown
Dirk Gustaaf Inzé



MASARYK
UNIVERSITY
DOCTOR
HONORIS
CAUSA

MASARYKOVA UNIVERZITA
DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA 2025

HONORARY DOCTORATES OF MASARYK UNIVERSITY AWARDING CEREMONY

THURSDAY 27TH MARCH 2025 FROM 10AM
DURATION OF THE CEREMONY APPROX. 90 MINUTES

KAREL ENGLIŠ GREAT HALL
FACULTY OF LAW, VEVEŘÍ 70

PROGRAMME OF THE CEREMONY

To the accompaniment of a fanfare, the following academic dignitaries will take their places in the auditorium in order:
members of the scientific councils of MU
Vice-Deans of MU
Deans of MU and their representatives
Vice-rectors of MU
Rectors and other representatives of universities
moderating Vice-Rector Jiří Hanuš
promoter Šárka Pospíšilová
Martin Repko for Faculty of Medicine MU
Pavel Plevka for CEITEC MU
Jennifer Brown, doctor honoris causa in spe
Dirk Inzé, doctor honoris causa in spe
Rector Martin Bareš

The anthems of the Czech Republic, the European Union, the United States of America and the Belgium will be played.
Jiří Hanuš will take over the opening ceremony.
Martin Repko will introduce Jennifer Brown.
Pavel Plevka will introduce Dirk Inzé.
Jiří Hanuš will ask the Rector for approval to continue with the ceremony.
Rector Bareš speech and his approval.
Reading of the graduation vows.
Graduation of Jennifer Brown.
Speech of the new Honorary Doctor of MU.
Graduation of Dirk Inzé.
Speech of the new Honorary Doctor of MU.

Musical performance by the vocal quintet Ensemble Frizzante.

Jiří Hanuš will close the ceremony.
Academic dignitaries leave the auditorium to a fanfare.

Jennifer Ruth Brown

HONORARY DOCTOR
IN THE FIELD OF
MEDICAL SCIENCES

JENNIFER RUTH BROWN

Born 6th August 1969 in New York City, New York, USA

RESEARCH FOCUS

Chronic lymphocytic leukemia; Genetic of lymphoid malignancies; BCR inhibitors; BCL-2 inhibitors.

EDUCATION

2005	Harvard/Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, MA (MMSc)
1998	Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA (MD)
1998	Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (PhD)
1990	Yale University, New Haven, CT (BS; MS)

WORKING POSITIONS

Since 2019	Professor, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA
2013–2019	Associate Professor, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA
Since 2013	Associate Member, Eli and Edythe Broad Institute for Biomedical Research (Broad Institute), Cambridge, MA

SELECTED AWARDS

2024	Clinical Scholar Award, CLL Society
2022	Women in Medicine: Top Internist, FindATopDoc, Boston, MA
2021	World Expert in Leukemia (top 0.1 % of scholars), Expertscape
2014	George Canellos Award for Excellence in Clinical Investigation and Patient Care, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA
2014	Clinical Innovation Award, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA
2006	Young Scientist Award, Lymphoma Foundation of America (LFA), USA
1998	James Tolbert Shipley Prize, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA
1991	Hematology Prize, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA
1990	Alan M. Bateman Science Prize, Yale University, New Haven, CT

SELECTED INVITED LECTURES

2022	Understanding PI 3-Kinase Inhibitor Clinical Activity, Toxicity and Resistance in CLL, University College London Cancer Institute, London, UK
2019	What is the Future of PI3K Inhibitors in CLL? Emil J Freireich Grand Rounds, MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, USA
2015	From Clinical Trials to Clinical Practice: Integrating BCR Targeted Therapies in CLL Treatment, XVI International Workshop on Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia (iwCLL), Sydney, Australia

SELECTED SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES

2025–2028	Secretary, American Society of Hematology
2022–2023	President, Society of Hematologic Oncology
2021–2025	Scientific Advisory Board Member, Lymphoma Research Foundation
Od 2014	Steefing Committee Member, Society of Hematologic Oncology
Od 2013	Medical Advisory Board, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, White Plains, NY
2013	Food and Drug Administration Advisory Panel, Minimal Residual Disease in Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL), Bethesda, MD (just in 2013)
Od 2013	Medical Advisory Board, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, White Plains, NY
Od 2011	Director, Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL) Center, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA

MEMBERSHIP IN EDITORIAL BOARDS

2021–2024	Scientific Editor, Blood Cancer Discovery, Journal by American Association for Cancer Research (AACR)
Od 2019	Member, Editorial Board, Blood Reviews
Od 2018	Member, Editorial Board, Clinical Lymphoma, Myeloma and Leukemia
2017–2019	Member, Editorial Board, Clinical Oncology News
Od 2017	Member, Editorial Board, Advances in Cell and Gene Therapy
Od 2017	Member, Editorial Board, Blood
2015–2018	Member, Editorial Board, Leukemia and Lymphoma
2014–2020	Member, Editorial Board, Journal of Clinical Oncology
Od 2014	Member, Editorial Board, Targeted Therapies in Oncology
Od 2012	Member, Editorial Board, American Journal of Blood Research
Od 2008	Member, Editorial Board, Clinical Oncology News
Od 2006	Member, Editorial Board, Clinical Cancer Research

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Wang L, Lawrence MS, Youzhong W, Stojanov P, Sougnez C, Stevenson K, Werner L, Sivachenko A, DeLuca DS, Zhang L, Zhang W, Vartanov A, Fernandes SM, Goldstein NR, Folco EG, Cibulskis K, Tesar B, Sievers QL, Shefler E, Gabriel S, Hacohen N, Reed R, Meyerson M, Golub TR, Lander ES, Neuberg D, Brown JR*, Getz G*, Wu CJ*. SF3B1 and other novel cancer genes in chronic lymphocytic leukemia. N Engl J Med. 2011 Dec 29;365(26):2497-506. doi: 10.1056/NEJMoa1109016. Epub 2011 Dec 12. PMCID: PMC3685413

Brown JR, Byrd JC, Coutre SE, Benson DM, Flinn IW, Wagner-Johnston, Spurgeon SE, Kahl BS, Bello C, Webb HK, Johnson DM, Peterman H, Li D, Jahn TM, Lannutti BJ, Ulrich RG, Yu AS, Miller LL, Furman RR. Idelalisib, an Inhibitor of Phosphatidylinositol 3-Kinase p110δ, for relapsed/refractory chronic lymphocytic leukemia. Blood. 2014 May 29;123(22):3390-7. doi: 10.1182/blood-2013-11-535047. Epub 2014 Mar 10. PMCID: PMC4123414

Lampson BL, Kasar SN, Matos TR, Morgan EA, Rassenti L, Davids MS, Fisher DC, Freedman AS, Jacobson CA, Armand P, Abramson JS, Arnason JE, Kipps TJ, Fein J, Fernandes S, Hanna J, Ritz J, Kim HT, Brown JR. Idelalisib given front-line for treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukemia causes frequent immune-mediated hepatotoxicity. Blood. 2016 Jul 14;128(2):195-203. doi: 10.1182/blood-2016-03-707133. Epub 2016 May 31. PMCID: PMC4946200

Kasar S#, Kim J#, Improgo R, Tiao G, Polak P, Haradhvala N, Lawrence MS, Kiezun A, Fernandes SM, Bahl S, Sougnez C, Gabriel S, Lander ES, Kim HT, Getz G*, Brown JR*. Whole-genome sequencing reveals activation-induced cytidine deaminase signatures during indolent chronic lymphocytic leukaemia evolution. Nat Commun. 2015 Dec 7; 6:8866.

Lampson BL, Yu L, Glynn RJ, Barrientos JC, Jacobsen ED, Banerji V, Jones JA, Walewska R, Savage KJ, Michaud GF, Moslehi JJ, Brown JR. Ventricular Arrhythmias and Sudden Death in Patients taking Ibrutinib. Blood. 2017 May 4; 129(18):2581-84. PMID: 28223277.

Byrd JC, Hillmen P, O'Brien S, Barrientos J, Reddy N, Coutre S, Tam CS, Mulligan SP, Jaeger U, Barr PM, Furman RR, Kipps TJ, Thornton P, Moreno C, Montillo M, Pagel JM, Burger JA, Woyach JA, Dai S, Vezan R, James DF, Brown JR. Long-Term Follow-Up of the RESONATE™ Phase 3 Trial of Ibrutinib Versus Ofatumumab. Blood 2019; 133(19): 2031-2042. PMID: 30842083; PMCID: PMC6509542; DOI: 10.1182/blood-2018-08-870238.

Tam CS, Robak T, Ghia P, Kahl BS, Walker P, Janowski W, Simpson D, Shadman M, Ganly PS, Laurenti L, Opat S, Tani M, Ciepluch H, Verner E, Šimkovič M, Österborg A, Trněný M, Tedeschi A, Paik JC, Kuwahara SB, Feng S, Ramakrishnan V, Cohen A, Huang J, Hillmen P, Brown JR. Zanubrutinib Monotherapy for Patients with Treatment Naïve Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia and 17p Deletion. Haematologica 2020; [Early view]. PMID: 33054121. DOI: 10.3324/haematol.2020.259432.

Davids MS, Lampson BL, Tyekucheva S, Wang Z, Lowney JC, Pazienza S, Montegaard J, Patterson V, Weinstock M, Crombie JL, Ng SY, Kim AI, Jacobson CA, LaCasce AS, Armand P, Arnason JE, Fisher DC, Brown JR. Acalabrutinib, Venetoclax, and Obinutuzumab as Frontline Treatment for Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia: A Single-Arm, Open-Label, Phase 2 Study. Lancet Oncol 2021;22(10):1391-1402. PMID: 34534514. DOI: 10.1016/S1470-2045(21)00455-1.

Lampson BL, Gupta A, Tyekucheva S, Mashima K, Petráčková A, Wang Z, Wojciechowska N, Shaughnessy CJ, Baker PO, Fernandes SM, Shupe S, Machado JH, Fardoun R, Kim AS, Brown JR. Rare Germline ATM Variants Influence the Development of Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia. J Clin Oncol. 2023 Feb 10;41(5):1116-1128. Epub 2022 Oct 31. PMID: 36315919; PMCID: PMC9928739. DOI: 10.1200/JCO.22.00269.

Brown JR, Eichhorst B, Hillmen P, Jurczak W, Kaźmierczak M, Lamanna N, O'Brien SM, Tam CS, Qiu L, Zhou K, Simkovic M, Mayer J, Gillespie-Twardy A, Ferrajoli A, Ganly PS, Weinkove R, Grosicki S, Mital A, Robak T, Osterborg A, Yimer HA, Salmi T, Wang MD, Fu L, Li J, Wu K, Cohen A, Shadman M. Zanubrutinib or Ibrutinib in Relapsed or Refractory Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia. N Engl J Med. 2023 Jan 26;388(4):319-332. PMID: 36511784. DOI: 10.1056/NEJMoa2211582. Epub 2022 Dec 13.

LAUDATIO

Martin Repko

It is with deep respect and admiration that we would like to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of Professor Jennifer Ruth Brown to the understanding of the pathogenesis and treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukemia by awarding her an honorary doctorate from Masaryk University. Her tireless work and dedication to her patients have fundamentally influenced modern approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of this disease.

Professor Jennifer Brown is Director of the Center for Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. She is also a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. She received her academic training at Yale University, from which she graduated with honours in molecular biology, and subsequently attended Harvard Medical School, where she received her MD and PhD in molecular genetics in 1998. There she was awarded the James Tolbert Shipley Prize. After completing her internship and residency in internal medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital, she continued her specialty training in hematology and oncology at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Since 2004, she has taught at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard Medical School. There she also directs a clinical-translational research program focused on chronic lymphocytic leukemia.

Her research interests include the development of novel targeted therapeutics for chronic lymphocytic leukemia and the study of the genomics of this disease. Prof Brown has played a key role in the clinical development of drugs such as idelalisib and ibrutinib, leading to their approval for the treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukaemia. These drugs have significantly improved treatment outcomes for patients with chronic lymphocytic leukaemia. These patients now have the same likelihood of survival as their peers without the disease thanks to the new therapy.

Professor Jennifer Brown's genomic studies have contributed to the characterisation of somatic mutations associated with chronic lymphocytic leukaemia. For example, she published the first large-scale analysis of the disease genome using next-generation sequencing. She recently identified genomic predictors of treatment response to ibrutinib and predictors of resistance to venetoclax, idelalisib or pirtobrutinib. She has also characterized the mechanisms of action of idelalisib, including its unusual mechanism of action and autoimmune drug toxicity associated with a decrease in regulatory T cells. She focuses on the implementation of genomic technologies in clinical practice. Professor Brown also has a long-standing interest in genetic predispositions leading to the development of leukemia. She is the author of an extensive study of gene variants that contribute to the development of these diseases.

Recently, Professor Jennifer Brown's research group has focused on designing clinical trials using combinations of new targeted drugs. For example, the drug combination acalabrutinib-venetoclax-obinutuzumab (AVO) in the AMPLIFY trial, the results of which were recently published. This study is expected to lead to the approval of this combination for the time-limited treat-

ment of chronic lymphocytic leukemia, which will represent another important therapeutic advance.

In 2014, Prof. Brown received two major awards from the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute: The Clinical Innovation Award and the George Canellos Award for Excellence in Clinical Research and Patient Care Excellence, respectively. She is a member of the International Workshop on Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (iwCLL) and is recognized globally as a leading expert in the field of chronic lymphocytic leukemia, as evidenced by her inclusion on the list of highly cited researchers with many papers among the top 1% most cited in the field.

Prof. Brown is an extremely active participant in several prestigious international conferences. We are delighted that on the day of the awarding of the honorary doctorate at Masaryk University she will also speak at the conference of the Czech Group for Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia, which is taking place in Brno. Professor Jennifer Brown has a long-standing scientific collaboration with experts from Masaryk University in the field of chronic lymphocytic leukaemia research.

SOLEMN OATH

Distinguished madam, before I confer upon you this title in appreciation of your extraordinary scientific merits and exceptional competences, we must observe the ancient custom which requires those about to be presented with this academic title to take a solemn oath.

Distinguished madam because you have contributed to the development of our university and provided others with an example worthy of following, I hereby ask you to swear:

First, that you shall forever maintain your allegiance to this university, which bears the illustrious name of Masaryk, forever keep your friendship and continue to support it with all your strength.

Moreover, that you shall continue to cultivate the development of human knowledge so that its light shines ever brighter. And finally, that you shall remain in the future as you are now, unchanging.

Do you swear and promise to do so to the best of your knowledge and belief?

I SWEAR AND I PROMISE.

Now that I have gratefully received your solemn oath, I, the duly constituted promoter, by the authority bestowed upon me, proclaim you,

JENNIFER BROWN,
HONORARY DOCTOR
IN THE FIELD OF MEDICAL SCIENCES.

I hereby publicly declare your appointment and grant you the rights and privileges associated with this title. As proof, I present you with this diploma, bearing the seal of Masaryk University, and confer upon you the Gold Medal of this university.

SPEECH

Jennifer Ruth Brown

I am deeply honoured to have been chosen to receive this honorary degree of doctorate honoris causa – it is the first honorary degree I have received and not something I expected. Certainly not when I started to be fascinated by medicine as a child and would investigate the insects that turned up dead in our swimming pool. I pursued biochemistry and molecular biology training throughout undergraduate and my PhD training, but it was really the hematology class in medical school that captured my fascination. How beautiful blood cells are under the microscope! This eventually led me to benign hematology, then to lymphoma training – until chronic lymphocytic leukemia captured my attention as I began my faculty career. CLL is such a variable disease in its clinical course, should even be considered two different diseases based on one of its biological subcategories, and one of the most heritable cancers yet still we have not identified a familial syndrome. CLL is also relatively easily studied because the cells circulate in the bloodstream. But I was attracted particularly by the still not completely explained biologic variability.

I have been privileged to help drive the transformation in CLL therapy that has occurred with targeted small molecule therapies in the last 15-18 years. I remember when patients lived with massive lymph nodes obscuring their neck and protruding from their armpits, that we struggled to shrink with therapy that was either ineffective, carried significant side effects, or both. Then I treated several of these patients on the first phase 1 studies of the first PI3K inhibitor idelalisib or the first BTK inhibitor ibrutinib, and interestingly, their white count went up at first – an event typically associated with disease worsening – but at the same time those lymph nodes melted away and the patients felt better. So, I kept treating, and the white count stabilized and then came down, and the nodes kept melting away, and it was magical. We then combined those drugs with other drugs and moved on to next generation targeted inhibitors with fewer side effects, and now most recently we have combined these next generation targeted inhibitors together, allowing us to stop them after about a year of therapy, and still have durable remissions. We also now have multiple classes of inhibitors of the same target, so that we can go from one class to another when resistance sets in. But what I most hope is that with combinations of several inhibitors, together with new immune therapies, we can push toward cure without chemotherapy in the coming years.

Interestingly the targets of these therapies in CLL are typically just overactive, not mutated – which is distinct from many other cancers where mutation defines a good target. I have also been privileged to investigate the mutational landscape of CLL from the beginning, both somatic – the variable patterns at diagnosis and when resistance develops to these highly effective targeted inhibitors – and germline. My connection to the Czech scientific and medical community dates to meeting and collaborating with Marek Mraz over a decade ago when he was in Tom Kipps' group at UCSD; we continue to work on mechanisms of resistance to these targeted inhibitors. I also have a long-

standing interest in trying to understand why CLL is highly inherited in families, which also has proved to be a more complicated problem than in many other cancers. For that I have collaborated with Eva Kriegova's group, studying the ATM tumour suppressor gene which we and they have found to be often mutated in patients who develop CLL. I continue to work on this problem of CLL heritability –and do think ATM may be involved. I have also been privileged to see the recent contributions of the Czech CLL Study Group to our field and to deepen my connections to Masaryk University, particularly Prof. Pospíšilová and Prof. Doubek.

In closing, I would like to thank Masaryk University in Brno with deep gratitude for awarding me the title of doctor honoris causa. I am honoured to accept and do so also on behalf of the many colleagues, and trainees in my laboratory and clinical practice, who have contributed to this work, but most of all I do so on behalf of the many patients I have cared for, who have been bold enough to be the first or sixth person in the world to take a new drug on a clinical trial, and who in doing so have helped change the world. For them I continue the work. Thank you.

Dirk Gustaaf Inzé

HONORARY DOCTOR
IN THE FIELD OF
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

DIRK GUSTAAF INZÉ

Born 19th October 1957 in Hamme, Belgium.

RESEARCH FOCUS

Molecular biology; Plant systems biology; Plant physiology; Plant biotechnology

EDUCATION

1979–1984	Ghent University (PhD in Biology)
1976–1979	Ghent University (Master in Biology)

WORKING POSITIONS

Od 2023	Emeritus Group Leader 'Innovative Breeding' at VIB-Ugent Center for Plant Systems Biology, Ghent, Belgium
1999–2002	Vice-Scientific Director of the Department of Genetics, Ghent University/VIB, Ghent, Belgium
1998–1999	Scientific Founder and Chief Scientific Officer of the biotech company CropDesign, Ghent, Belgium
1993–1997	Guest Professor at Ghent University (Belgium)
1990–1998	Research Director (1st class) at the INRA (Institut National de La Recherche Agronomique), Paris, France
1984–1990	Junior Group Leader (FWO) at the Laboratory of Genetics of Ghent, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium
1979–1984	PhD studentship with the Belgian Science Foundation (FWO), Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

SELECTED AWARDS

2022	The AAB President Medal, Global Plant Council
2022	The Society for Experimental Biology Plenary Lecture Award, Lancaster, UK
2020	Elected member Academia Europaea, München, Germany
2019	Elected to the rank of AAAS Fellow by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) for lifelong dedication to Plant Science, Washington, D.C., USA
2019	Nominated for the award of Commemorative Medal of the Faculty of AgriSciences at Mendel University, Brno, Czech Republic
2019	Nominated 'The 20 most Influential People in the European Seed Sector', London, UK

2017	World Agriculture Prize GCHERA, Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences, Costa Rica
2016	Professor Shu-Chen Grace Chen Lectureship Award, Institute of Plant & Microbial Biology, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan
2010	Five-yearly FWO Excellence Prize: Prize Dr A. De Leeuw--Damry-Bourlart in Exact Sciences, Brussels, Belgium
2009	Medal at the Palacky University, Olomouc, Czech Republic

SELECTED INVITED LECTURES

2023	Invited speaker Academia Europaea Building Bridges 2023, Munich, Germany
2023	Keynote speaker 33rd International Conference on Arabidopsis Research (ICAR2023), Chiba, Japan
2023	Invited speaker Bayer & Euroseeds reception “Tasting the fruit of innovation in plant breeding”, Brussels, Belgium
2022	Invited speaker Bayer Foundation Symposium “From Gene Editing to Gene Writing”, Cologne, Germany
2022	Keynote speaker Conference on genome editing for food safety and crop improvement Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic
2022	Invited speaker World Agri-Tech Innovation Summit, London, UK
2022	Invited speaker at the annual conference of The Society for Experimental Biology – SEB, Montpellier, France
2022	Invited speaker 16th congress of the Mediterranean Phytopathological Union – MPU, Limassol, Cyprus
2021	Invited speaker and chair Plant Biology Europe 2021, Turin, Italy
2020	Invited speaker Plant Science for Climate Emergency: the pivotal role of genome editing organized by ASPB (online)

SELECTED SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES

Od 2023	Member of the Adam Mickiewicz University Scientific Advisory Board, Poznan, Poland
Od 2022	Member of Green Tissue Engineering Scientific Advisory Board (International Platform)
Od 2021	Member of the ERC Scientific Council, Brussels, Belgium
Od 2020	Member of the International Advisory Committee of the Brazilian Bioenergy Science and Technology Conference (BBEST 2020), Brazilia
2019	Chair of the panel ‘LS9-Life Sciences and Non-Medical Biotechnology’ in the ERC Advanced Grant 2019 evaluation (ERC-2019-AdG), Brussels, Belgium
2017–2020	Member of the ‘Institute of Plant and Microbial Biology’ (IPMB) Scientific Advisory Board, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan

2015 Member of the Advisory Group to support the creation of the "Research Accelerator on Agriculture: Water and Energy" at the University of Évora, Évora, Portugal
2014 Member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts (Natural Sciences), Salzburg, Austria
2014 Evaluation Member for the Science Foundation Ireland, Dublin, Ireland
2014 Vice-Chair at the on-site assessment of the Institute of Genetics & Developmental Biology (IGDB), Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China

MEMBERSHIP IN EDITORIAL BOARDS

Molecular Systems Biology (od 2014, Editorial board member)
International Journal of Cytogenetics and Cell Biology (since 2009, Editorial board member)
Trends in Plant Science (TIPS) (od 2009, Editorial board member)
Plant Biotechnology Journal (od 2002, Editorial board member)
Plant Cell Physiology (2005 – 2008, Editorial board member)
The EMBO Journal (2005 – 2007, Editorial board member)
Journal of Experimental Botany (2003 – 2010, Editorial board member)
The Plant Journal (2003 – 2010, Editorial board member)
Plants (2000 – 2008, Editorial board member)
Plant Physiology (2000– 2007, Editorial board member)
Plant Science (2000– 2006, Editorial board member)

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Dima O., Custers R., De Veirman L. and Inzé D. (2023). EU legal proposal for genome-edited crops hints at a science--based approach. Trends Plant Sci. 28, 1350-1353.

Lorenzo C.D., Debray K., Herwegh D., Develtere W., Impens L., Schaumont D., Vandeputte W., Aesaert S., Coussens G., De Boe Y., Demuynck K., Van Hautegem T., Pauwels L., Jacobs T.B., Ruttink T., Nelissen H. and Inzé D. (2023). BREEDIT: a multiplex genome editing strategy to improve complex quantitative traits in maize. Plant Cell 35, 218-238.

Dima O., Heyvaert Y. and Inzé D. (2022). Interactive database of genome editing applications in crops and future policy making in the European Union. Trends Plant Sci. 27, 746-748.

Li T., Natran A., Chen Y., Vercruysse J., Wang K., Gonzalez N., Dubois M. and Inzé D. (2019). A genetics screen highlights emerging roles for CPL3, RST1 and URT1 in RNA metabolism and silencing. Nat. Plants 5, 539-550.

Van den Broeck L., Dubois M., Vermeersch M., Storme V., Matsui M. and Inzé D. (2017). From network to phenotype: the dynamic wiring of an Arabidopsis transcriptional network induced by osmotic stress. Mol. Syst. Biol. 13, 961.

Sun X., Cahill J., Van Hautegem T., Feys K., Whipple C., Novák O., Delbare S., Versteele C., Demuynck K., De Block J., Storme V., Claeys H., Van Lijsebettens M., Coussens G., Ljung K., De Vliegher A., Muszynski M., Inzé D. and Nelissen H. (2017). Altered expression of maize PLASTOCHRON1 enhances biomass and seed yield by extending cell division duration. Nat. Commun. 8, 14752.

Gonzalez N., Pauwels L., Baekelandt A., De Milde L., Van Leene J., Besbrugge N., Heyndrickx K.S., Cuéllar Pérez A., Nagels Durand A., De Clercq R., Van De Slijke E., Vanden Bossche R., Eeckhout D., Gevaert K., Vandepoele K., De Jaeger G., Goossens A. and Inzé D. (2015). A repressor protein complex regulates leaf growth in Arabidopsis. Plant Cell 27, 2273-2287.

Vanhaeren H., Gonzalez N., Coppens F., De Milde L., Van Daele T., Vermeersch M., Eloy N.B., Storme V. and Inzé D. (2014). Combining growth-promoting genes leads to positive epistasis in Arabidopsis thaliana. eLife 3, e02252.

Eloy N.B., Gonzalez N., Van Leene J., Maleux K., Vanhaeren H., De Milde L., Dhondt, S., Vercruysse L., Witters E., Mercier R., Cromer L., Beemster G.T.S., Remaut H., Van Montagu M.C.E., De Jaeger G., Ferreira P.C.G. and Inzé D. (2012). SAMBA, a plant-specific anaphase-promoting complex/cyclosome regulator is involved in early development and A-type cyclin stabilization. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 109, 13853-13858.

Skirycz A., Vandenbroucke K., Clauw P., Maleux K., De Meyer B., Dhondt S., Pucci A., Gonzalez N., Hoeberichts F., Tognetti, V.B., Galbiati M., Tonelli C., Van Breusegem F., Vuylsteke M. and Inzé D. (2011). Survival and growth of Arabidopsis plants given limited water are not equal. Nat. Biotechnol. 29, 212-214.

LAUDATIO

Pavel Plevka

Magnificent Rector, esteemed colleagues, distinguished guests,
dear Professor Inzé,

It is a profound privilege to stand before you today to honour an exceptional scientist, innovator, and advocate for science—Professor Dirk Inzé. His contributions to plant biology and biotechnology have transformed our understanding of plant growth and resilience, shaping the way we address global challenges such as food security and climate change.

For anyone who has walked the path of plant science, the name Brno inevitably resonates as the birthplace of genetics. Gregor Johann Mendel's meticulous work on pea plants laid the foundation for modern molecular genetics long before DNA was even discovered. It is fitting, then, that today we welcome a scientist whose own journey has been defined by a relentless quest for knowledge, innovation, and impact—much like Mendel himself.

A Pioneer in Plant Science

Professor Dirk Inzé is one of the most influential figures in modern plant science. With an illustrious career spanning over four decades, he has been at the forefront of scientific breakthroughs that have revolutionized our understanding of plant growth, stress responses, and the molecular networks that regulate plant development. His long-term research goal—achieving a holistic understanding of the molecular pathways shaping plant growth—has opened new perspectives in identifying regulatory networks that can be targeted by advanced breeding and genome editing technologies. His work has provided fundamental insights critical for crop improvement and global food security.

As Professor Emeritus at Ghent University and the long-time Scientific Director of the VIB- Center for Plant Systems Biology, he has led one of Europe's premier research institutions in plant biotechnology. His work has bridged the gap between fundamental discovery and applied innovation, ensuring that scientific advancements translate into sustainable agricultural solutions. Under his leadership, the VIB Center for Plant Systems Biology became not only a world-class research institution but also a catalyst for innovation, fostering the creation of several start-up companies and contributing to the establishment one of the largest agri-biotech clusters in Europe.

A Legacy of Excellence

Professor Inzé's remarkable scientific productivity is reflected in over 600 publications, an H-index of 140, and more than 30 professional awards, placing him among the world's most cited plant scientists. His contributions have earned him numerous prestigious accolades, including:

— The Francqui Prize on Biological and Medical Sciences (2005) – often referred to as the Belgian Nobel Prize
— The World Agriculture Prize (2017)
— Membership in the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO)
— Fellowship of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) for lifelong dedication to plant science
— Membership in Academia Europaea, a pan-European network of leading scientists and scholars
— The President's Medal awarded by the Association of Applied Biologists, a prestigious recognition for significant contributions to applied biology
— Vice Presidency of the European Plant Science Organization (EPSO)

A Visionary Leader and Advocate for Science

Beyond his groundbreaking research, Professor Inzé has dedicated himself to mentorship, collaboration, and scientific leadership. His influence extends far beyond the laboratory—he has actively shaped international science policy, particularly advocating for the use of gene editing in agriculture. As the founder of the EU-SAGE network, he has united 131 European plant science institutes to promote the development of European policies on genome editing.

Professor Inez's contributions go beyond research and leadership—he is a relentless advocate for scientific integrity, communication, and policy engagement. He reminds us that, in today's world of misinformation and scepticism, scientists have a moral duty to step out of the ivory tower and engage with society, policymakers, and future generations. He leads by example—his tireless efforts to push for legislative support for gene editing in the EU reflect his commitment not only to science but to the well-being of our planet and future generations.

A Special Connection to CEITEC and Masaryk University

His connection to Masaryk University and CEITEC is deeply personal and significant. As a member—and later chairman—of the CEITEC International Science Advisory Board, he has not only witnessed but also actively supported the transformation of CEITEC into one of Europe's leading research institutions.

More than 10 years ago, Professor Inzé accepted our invitation to serve on CEITEC's International Scientific Advisory Board. Despite being a leading figure in his field—who could have chosen to serve on advisory boards at the world's most prestigious institutions—he did not hesitate to support a newly established research institution that was, at the time, merely an EU-funded project.

In the beginning, CEITEC was a risky endeavour—but Professor Inzé recognized its potential. For over a decade, he played an active role in guiding CEITEC, flying to Brno every year, and bringing his expertise and vision to help us grow from an unknown institution to an internationally recognized research centre. He played a key role in establishing CEITEC as a place for groundbreak-

ing science, world-class education, and real-world impact. We are immensely proud and deeply grateful for his time, dedication, and unwavering support.

Honouring a Legacy of Scientific Excellence

Today, as Masaryk University confers upon Professor Dirk Inzé an honorary doctorate, we do more than recognize his scientific brilliance. We celebrate his vision, leadership, and unwavering dedication to using science for the benefit of society. His journey embodies the very values that Masaryk University holds dear—curiosity, integrity, and a commitment to knowledge as a force for progress.

Professor Inzé, your work has shaped modern plant biology, empowered scientists across disciplines, and provided solutions to some of humanity's most pressing challenges. Your legacy will continue to inspire generations to come.

On behalf of Masaryk University, I extend our deepest gratitude and heartfelt congratulations. Welcome to our academic community as an Honorary Doctor of Masaryk University!

SOLEMN OATH

Distinguished sir, before I confer upon you this title
in appreciation of your extraordinary scientific merits
and exceptional competences, we must observe
the ancient custom which requires those about
to be presented with this academic title to take
a solemn oath.

Distinguished sir because you have contributed
to the development of our university and provided
others with an example worthy of following,
I hereby ask you to swear:

First, that you shall forever maintain your
allegiance to this university, which bears the illustrious
name of Masaryk, forever keep your friendship
and continue to support it with all your strength.

Moreover, that you shall continue to cultivate the
development of human knowledge so that its light
shines ever brighter. And finally, that you shall
remain in the future as you are now, unchanging.

Do you swear and promise
to do so to the best of your knowledge and belief?

I SWEAR AND I PROMISE.

Now that I have gratefully received your solemn oath,
I, the duly constituted promoter, by the authority
bestowed upon me, proclaim you,

DIRK INZÉ,
HONORARY DOCTOR
IN THE FIELD OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES.

I hereby publicly declare your appointment and grant
you the rights and privileges associated with this title.
As proof, I present you with this diploma, bearing the
seal of Masaryk University, and confer upon you the
Gold Medal of this university.

SPEECH

Dirk Gustaaf Inzé

Vaše Magnificence, pane rektore, Honorabiles, Spectabiles, vážení členové vědeckých rad, vážení hosté, dámy a pánové,

I am very proud to receive an honorary doctorate of Masaryk University. Since the early days of my interest in science and most notably plant science I can across the name of the city Brno, of course famous for the abbey in which Gregor Johann Mendel establish by meticulous work on peas the so-called Mendelian laws of genetics. The impact of this discovery, long before anything was known about DNA, cannot be underestimated. Recently, after delivering one of the 2023 Mendel Lectures, I visited the completely refurnished Mendel Museum, a very laudable initiative of Masaryk University. Mendel Museum tells the story of a humble genius, and I can witness here in front of you that the spirit of geniality remained part of the genetic code of so-many Czech researchers, not at least at Masaryk University. Without referring to any individual, it is fair to say that plant science in the Czech Republic and at Masaryk University is outstanding with many major discoveries in plant developmental biology, mode of action of plant hormones, genome and chromosome biology, RNA Biology, just to name a few. I had the honour to be part of the International Science Advisory Board of CEITEC, the Central European Institute for Technology (I was even for quite some years as chairman), and I have witnessed how this institute grew over time to one of the most respected science institutes in Europe. The role of Masaryk University and all the colleagues involved have been pivotal and I hope that CEITEC will have the means to continue to excel. CEITEC at Masaryk University is the place to be for performing amazing research and getting the best possible education.

Rather than elaborating on some specifics of my research I would like to share with you how I experienced my path in science. My journey in science evolved around three pillars: Science, Entrepreneurship and Science Advocacy, each contributing to a journey that seeks to drive transformation, which seeks to advocate for change, and that seeks to create a better future. Let me elaborate on the importance of these three hats.

What is it to be a scientist? From the earliest days of childhood, the scientist's heart beats with questions. How does the world work? How does evolution work? What determines size and shapes of organisms? And so on. This quest for knowledge stays life-long with scientists, a life that is characterized by a relentless curiosity and continuously challenging preconceived notions. Scientists dive into the depths of the unknown, armed with theories and guided by evidence. Every experiment is a chapter in an ongoing narrative of discovery, where both successes and failures contribute to the immense puzzle of understanding and knowledge. Yet, this journey is not without its trials. The life of a scientist demands resilience in the face of setbacks (for example when a grant proposal or paper is rejected), it requires patience during moments of uncertainty, and most importantly it requires the ability to embrace failure

as a stepping stone to success. It is a path that requires continuous learning, adapting to modern technologies, and engaging in international and/or interdisciplinary collaborations to tackle the often complex challenges. It is here that top universities such as Masaryk University have immense importance, not only for the top-notch research but also for the high-level education of bachelor, master and PhD students.

I witnessed the inception of plant molecular biology and how 40 years of worldwide research resulted in a paradigm shift in our understanding of the complex mechanisms that govern the growth, development, and response of plants to their environment. Over the past four decades, this field has evolved from its modest beginnings into a dynamic and influential discipline that has revolutionized agriculture and our perception of the natural world.

My path in science goes as far as the first description of a transgenic plant to the currently available amazing and immensely powerful toolbox including CRISPR-Cas gene editing, high-throughput sequencing, single cell- and spatial transcriptomics, and many more. With this toolbox we have the ever speeding up ability to push the boundaries of knowledge, revealing the complex web of genes, proteins, and regulatory networks that orchestrate the life of plants. The amount of newly generated information is just overwhelming and novel approaches using artificial intelligence are needed to fully grasps the complexity.

But enough about being a scientist, most of you present here, know what it entails. But what happens when scientific insights are ready to leave the boundaries of the laboratory and find practical applications in the real world? This is where, of course with the help of professionals, the entrepreneur emerges. He or she is driven by a desire to transform knowledge into solutions that address pressing challenges such as food security and climate change. The entrepreneur takes risks (even at the risks over a reduced scientific output), develops proof-of-concept prototypes, help to secure funding, and navigates the hilly landscape of business and innovation. The entrepreneur's passion fuels the transition from ideation to implementation, creating substantial impact that extends beyond the boundaries of articles in academic journals. I am absolutely convinced that also here at Masaryk University many building stones are present to further transform basic research into benefits for society. This is far from an easy task but a task that requires perseverance and long-term thinking. In my field, advanced plant science and in particular new breeding technologies has offered and will continue to offer unprecedented solutions to some of the most pressing issues facing humanity, including the need to feed a growing population in face of a very worrying climate change while minimizing the environmental footprint of agriculture. It remains, more than ever, pivotal that we look ahead to these challenges and opportunities that lie on the horizon. Climate change, resource scarcity, and evolving pest and disease pressures demand innovative solutions that can only be realized through continued dedication to research, collaboration, and interdisciplinary thinking. Importantly, we scientists have the moral duty to assist solving the immense challenges our world is facing. Be brave, be bold in helping society and the planet not only as a scientist but also as an entrepreneur!

However, translating scientific advancements into real-world changes often requires more than science and entrepreneurship. This is where the role of

science advocacy and of science communication becomes paramount. The science advocate acts as a bridge between scientific progress, policy, and public awareness. She or he advocates for the integration of scientific evidence into decision-making processes, helping to ensure that the fruits of research are incorporated into regulations, laws, and policies that shape our societies. Many of you known that I spend, with the help of many others, considerable time in advocating for the use in the EU of gene editing for the development of an eco-friendly, sustainable and climate resilient agriculture. This has been for almost seven years an uphill battle often encountering unscientific fearmongering and misinformation. However, I am optimistic that science will prevail and that this year the EU finally will reach an agreement for a long-expected legislation. It is of pivotal importance for the future of plant biotechnology as well as for the well-being of our planet. Needless to say, that in a world dominated by social media, complot thinking and ignorance of scientific facts that scientists at Universities and Institutes need to step up the voice of reason and evidence.

In conclusion, the convergence of being a scientist, entrepreneur, and a science advocate embodies, at least for me, an intriguing synergy that propels society forward. For those active in science, I can only encourage you, and I know many are already doing so, to step out of the Ivory tower of science and to actively engage with tech transfer and with policy makers and society at large. Here at Masaryk University and CEITEC you are in pole position to take this challenge at hand.

Finally let me thank you again for awarding this honorary doctorate to plant biology, in a place where it all started two centuries ago. It is my strong believe that Masaryk University has an immense role to play in advancing science for the benefit of society.

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

Vocal quintet Ensemble Frizzante

The vocal quintet Ensemble Frizzante aims to discover forgotten compositions and the unusual connection between the human voice and musical instruments. It was founded in 2015 as an ensemble of professional singers from leading choirs in Brno. Since its founding in 2015, it has organized an annual concert series in Brno, and in 2023 it presents to Brno audiences prominent Czech soloists and wind instrument ensembles. It performs 10 to 20 concerts annually throughout the Czech Republic and has appeared at festivals in Austria and Slovakia. It regularly collaborates with leading Czech artists (Markét Cukrová, Lukáš Sommer, Roman Hoza, Ondřej Múčka, Roman Patočka and others).

The ceremony will feature a selection of songs from Antonín Dvořák's In Nature and Leoš Janáček's Ukvalské písně.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE AUDITORIUM MAXIMUM

Karel Engliš Great Hall

The ceremonies of Masaryk University are nowadays inseparably linked with the auditorium of the Faculty of Law, which serves as a university-wide auditorium.

In its early days, in the 1930s, it was the venue for most of the university's ceremonial moments, which included the inauguration of lecturers and the lavish graduations of honorary doctors. However, the space was considered a temporary makeshift for such ceremonies and was to serve as such only until the construction of the extensive university campus. For this reason, the auditorium was originally austere in character, almost devoid of artistic decoration. The only exception was the ceiling with stained glass windows by František Kysela.

The idea of building a large Academic Quarter with a monumental new hall was gradually abandoned and only the building of the Faculty of Law was realized from the original plan. It was therefore decided to create a more dignified framework for the festivities by decorating the original large blank wall in the front of the auditorium maxima.

The large-scale composition of Prometheus bringing fire to humankind, measuring 7.5×13 metres, is divided into three horizontal strips by Antonín Procházka. In the upper one is the god Helios announcing a new day to humankind, accompanied by the goddess of time Hora. In the middle strip are allegorical figures of all the sciences that were represented at the university - from left to right they are law, medicine, philosophy, art, pedagogy, and natural sciences. The centre of the painting is dominated by the figure of Prometheus with a burning torch. In the lower band, the work depicts humankind in its daily activities - building, seafaring, and agriculture. The figure of Prometheus is linked in meaning to a group of figures craving the fire of knowledge. The grand opening of Procházka's monumental work took place in the atmosphere of post-Monarchist Czechoslovakia on 16 December 1938. The composition had a turbulent fate during the war period. It was insensitively cut out of the frame by order of the Brno Gestapo, but thanks to the courage of Czech workers it was hidden in the cellar of the building. Three years after the war, the painter's companion completed the restoration of the work, Linka Procházková.

As part of the celebration of the 104th anniversary of the founding of the university in January 2023, the auditorium was named after the first rector of the university and one of the greatest personalities of his time, Karel Engliš.

Karel Engliš was not only the co-author and co-sponsor of the bill on the establishment of the "second Czech university", but later also its first rector, who in cooperation with the then president T. G. Masaryk managed to procure the basis of the university insignia - the rector's chain.

"It is important to remember the past because without it there would be no present. We can be rightly proud of our past because it was shaped by extraordinary personalities whose legacy should be regularly recalled so that it never disappears from our memory," said Martin Bareš, Rector of Masaryk University, during the unveiling of the name of the Karel Engliš Great Hall.

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