The Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya pays tribute to

MICHAEL SELA

Professor Michael Sela of the Weizmann Institute of Science is a world renowned immunologist. His groundbreaking research has most notably led to the development of Copaxone, a drug used to treat multiple sclerosis that has helped ease the suffering of millions of patients worldwide.

Born in Poland in 1924, Prof. Sela earned his Bachelor and Master of Science degrees from the School of Chemistry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, prior to focusing on life sciences. In 1946, while studying in Switzerland, he assisted the Aliyah Bet's efforts to help Jews immigrate. After Israel's inception, Prof. Sela, who is fluent in nine languages, served as the commercial attaché at the Israeli mission to Czechoslovakia.

After his return to Israel in 1950, Prof. Sela made the Weizmann Institute of Science his academic home. Under the guidance of Prof. Ephraim Katzir, one of the greatest scientists in Israel's history and the nation's fourth president, he completed his doctoral studies in biophysics.

Prof. Sela served in a variety of positions at the Weizmann Institute, including Head of the Chemical Immunology Department, Head of the Immunology Department and Dean of the Faculty of Biology. In 1975 he was named the sixth President of the Weizmann Institute of Science, a role he would go on to hold for a decade. Between 1986 and 1994, he served as Deputy Chairman of the Board of Governors at the Weizmann Institute.

In 1959, at the age of 35, Prof. Sela was awarded the Israel Prize for life sciences, but for him, this remarkable achievement was merely the beginning. A search for an element that would trigger multiple sclerosis in laboratory animals led Prof. Sela and his colleagues, Prof. Ruth Arnon and Dr. Deborah Titelebaum, to develop Copaxone, which would become the most popular multiple sclerosis drug ever sold by an Israeli company. Together with Dr. Esther Hurwitz and Dr. Esther Pirak, Prof. Sela also developed Erbitux, a drug used to treat colorectal cancer and head and neck cancers.

Over the years, Prof. Sela has penned over 800 essays, installments and books, and has served as a visiting professor in some of the leading universities worldwide, including Harvard, Berkeley and the Collège de France. Prof. Sela holds multiple honorary degrees and is the recipient of several prestigious awards, including the 1968 Rothschild Prize in Chemistry and the 1998 Wolf Prize in Medicine. In 2011 he was named Officer of the Order of the French Legion of Honor.

Prof. Sela is a member of several public organizations and leading scientific institutions in Israel and worldwide. He served as President of the Israel Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Chairman of the Israeli Immunological Society, a member of the Planning and Budgeting Committee at the Council for Higher Education, and Head of Presidency at the Movement for Quality Government in Israel. Prof. Sela has also served as an advisor to the World Health Organization and UNESCO, and as President of the European Molecular Biology Organization.

Prof. Sela, who as a student at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem had won a ballroom dancing competition, has been a supporter of the Batsheva Dance Company for over 40 years, and currently serves as honorary president of the company's public council. In 2004, celebrating his 80th birthday, Prof. Sela and his wife Sarah founded the Michael Sela Fund for Cultivation of Young Artists at Batsheva, which has so far supported over 100 installations.

As the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya celebrates its 20th anniversary, we wish to acknowledge the individuals who have laid the foundations for academia and scientific research in Israel. In recognition of his significant contribution to the world of medicine and his development of lifesaving drugs, and in appreciation of the key role he has played in making the Weizmann Institute of Science a leading academic institution in Israel and worldwide, Prof. Michael Sela is hereby named an

Honorary Fellow of the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya

Prof. Uriel Reichman
President and Founder

May 28, 2014
Herzliya, Israel