



WAISMAN CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Dedicated to the advancement of knowledge about human development, developmental disabilities, and neurodegenerative diseases.

M I L E S T O N E S

1963

Dedication of the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Memorial Laboratories on the UW-Madison campus, the precursor to the Waisman Center.



1965 Selection of UW-Madison by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) as one of the first two sites in the United States for a multidisciplinary center devoted to the study of human development and mental retardation.

1968 Designated as a University Affiliated Facility with the passage of the Developmental Disabilities Act, one of 10 initial programs—now, one of 61 in the United States. Began providing interdisciplinary training and clinical services two years later in temporary quarters on campus.

1971 Became the first University Affiliated Facility to develop a computer system for client data collection.



1973 Dedication of the Waisman Center, which was named for Harry A. Waisman, a biochemist, pediatrician, and pioneer in mental retardation research.

1973 Established a biomedical research unit at the Waisman Center, representing a new focal point for brain research on the UW-Madison campus. First unit coordinator was Clinton N. Woolsey, an acclaimed neuroscientist who, along with Harry Waisman, was a driving force in the establishment of the Waisman Center.



1975 Initiated one of the first genetics counseling training programs in the United States—the only one in the state of Wisconsin to this day.

1975 Establishment of the Friends of the Waisman Center by Harvey A. Stevens, the first program administrator of the Waisman Center.

1976 Established an international collection of art by people with developmental disabilities, featuring more than 150 artworks from 15 countries.

1979 Established the Communication Aids and Systems Clinic (CASC) to provide state-of-the-art augmentative and alternative communication services. A joint venture with UW-Hospitals and Clinics, CASC was one of the very early programs in the country with this focus.

1979 Opened the Waisman Early Childhood Program, a model school for children with diverse developmental needs.



1982 Appointment of Terrence R. Dolan, Ph.D. as director of the Waisman Center, a role he held for 20 years.

1983 Naming of an X-linked form of mental retardation the “Waisman Syndrome,” after Harry Waisman.

1983 Developed PEPPER, the first computer program designed to categorize the various factors contributing to speech disorders and to identify useful therapies. Currently, PEPPER (Programs to Examine Phonetic and Phonologic Evaluation Records) is used as a research tool in the quest for the genetic origins of childhood speech sound disorders.

1985 Developed the first edition of SALT (Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts), a new method for quickly analyzing speech and language—a standard for researchers and clinicians to this day.

1986 Initiated the Children's Theatre, an outreach performance series for young children and their families that draws thousands of people to the Center each year.



1989 Discovered a highly successful strategy for gene transfer that is the basis for many clinical trials of DNA vaccines and gene therapies.

1989 Expanded community outreach and training programs in response to new Birth to 3 Early Intervention federal legislation.

1990 Developed a training curriculum in conjunction with UW-Extension that has been used over the years by thousands of service providers who work with people who have developmental disabilities.

—**1992** Initiated the Alvin L. Berman & Ruth Bleier Memorial Student Research Award, given by the Friends of the Waisman Center, commemorating the contributions of these Waisman Center scientists.

—**1994** Organized a Constituent Advisory Committee to formally solicit advice from individuals with developmental disabilities and their families regarding programs and services.

—**1995** Incorporation of accessibility features developed at the Trace Center in Windows 95, the first time such features are built into a PC-based system.

—**1995** Established the NICHD-funded Waisman Center Post-Doctoral Training Program in Developmental Disabilities, an important initiative that expanded the Center's commitment to advanced research training.

—**1996** Established a state-wide twins database, the first of its kind and a resource for multiple research projects related to behavioral genetics and early childhood development.

—**1996** Established the Board of Visitors, an external advisory group to the Waisman Center.

—**1996** Opened the Family Village, an award-winning internet site and one of the first resources on the web designed for families and people affected by disability.



—**1996** Demonstrated that infants can keep track of statistical properties of sounds to learn language.

—**1997** Provided new evidence that, in individuals with Down syndrome, language skills once thought to plateau in childhood continue to develop into adulthood.

—**1998** Established a Waisman Center community outreach site dedicated to community training on the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities.

—**1999** Publication of the book *Improving the Communication of People with Down Syndrome*, integrating two decades of research on Down syndrome conducted in nine Waisman Center laboratories.

—**2000** Established the Waisman Resource Center, a statewide source of information and assistance for families and providers about children who have special health care needs.

—**2001** Identified the gene responsible for Alexander disease.

—**2001** Provided new evidence that Down syndrome and fragile X syndrome are characterized by different language and cognitive challenges.

—**2001** Completion of a \$25 million addition, including the six-story William F. and Betty Jo Heckrodt Translational Research Tower and the Judith B. Ward Early Childhood Wing.



Craig Dugan

—**2001** Provided new evidence, through a longitudinal study, of the factors leading to life-long psychological well-being in families who have a son or daughter with a developmental disability.

—**2001** Established the W. M. Keck Laboratory for Brain Imaging and Behavior, one of the most comprehensive and sophisticated brain imaging centers in the world.



Jeff Miller

—**2002** Appointment of Marsha Mailick Seltzer, Ph.D. as Waisman Center director.

—**2003** Developed new stem cell approaches for treating conditions such as Parkinson's disease and ALS.

—**2003** Conducted first test in the United States of a child with dual cochlear implants.

—**2003** Patented a new test that assesses hearing in children in complex environments.

—**2003** Provided compelling new evidence from the Chicago Longitudinal Study that preschool programs have positive life-long effects on high school graduation rates, prevention of delinquency, and self-sufficiency in adulthood.

—**2003** Partnered with Madison Metropolitan School District to establish a pilot four-year old kindergarten program.

—**2003** As of this year, provided services and supports to 60,000 individuals with developmental disabilities and their families and training to 6,000 university students.



Bob Rathid