

## UPDATE

# Heffter Research Institute

THE HEFFTER RESEARCH INSTITUTE continues to make slow but steady progress. With the donations received last year, we have funded two small research proposals, are reviewing several others, and have requested that the author of one proposal make several revisions. We continue to receive inquiries from individuals who have visited our website ([www.heffter.org](http://www.heffter.org)) about opportunities for graduate training and research and even employment at the Institute itself! Heffter board members have assisted in the preparation of several research proposals and have consulted with qualified investigators at several universities who are planning clinical studies with psychedelic agents. It is certainly clear that we have the opportunity to do a great deal more if we receive additional funding from donors.

We are also in the final production stages of the first *Heffter Review of Psychedelic Research*. By the time you read this, Volume 1 of the review will be back from the printers and in distribution. We shall be soliciting contributions for Volume 2 of the *Review* in the coming months and hope to improve both the quality and quantity of the chapters as publication of the *Review* continues.

#### Prizes awarded in 1997

The Heffter Institute also awarded the first two prizes for outstanding research in 1997. As part of our efforts to encourage more academic scientists to consider research with these novel substances, we decided to award prizes for outstanding research achievement, both in the preclinical and clinical sciences. The recipients of these awards are selected by the Heffter Board of Directors from among all the active research investigators in the field. Board members are ineligible to receive a prize. The awards consist of a \$2,000 prize that may be used to support research, as well as an inscribed plaque. Such awards



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Research  
at the Frontiers  
of the Mind

are given by virtually all professional societies and organizations and are meant to recognize outstanding scientific achievement. Not too surprisingly, no such prizes have been available for research with psychedelics, but the Heffter Institute has just changed that.

#### Heffter Award for Outstanding Clinical Research

The first Heffter Award for Outstanding Clinical Research was given to Dr. Franz Vollenweider, at the Psychiatric University Hospital, in Zürich, Switzerland. Dr. Vollenweider has been carrying out ground-breaking studies using Positron Emission Tomography (PET) to study brain function while subjects are under the influence of psilocybin and other psychoactive substances (see page 4). His studies are pointing to specific brain structures that are activated or suppressed during altered states of consciousness.

#### Heffter Award for Outstanding Basic Research

The first Heffter Award for Outstanding Basic Research went to Dr. Elaine Sanders-Bush, in the Pharmacology Department at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. Dr. Sanders-Bush has spent years studying the biochemical signaling events that occur in brain cells after they are activated by substances such as LSD and mescaline. She continues to be at the forefront, studying signaling mechanisms of brain serotonin 5-HT<sub>2</sub> receptors.

We congratulate both of these outstanding scientists for taking on challenges that others have declined, and for pushing back the frontiers of our knowledge about psychedelics.

As we move into our fifth year of existence, we see many opportunities and challenges. We still seek "angels" who might fully endow the institute, but in the meantime we are making positive things happen now. •