

## Editorial

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# Editorial

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Dear Reader,

Two decades ago, in 2000, Dr. Armin Schram (1929–2015), chemist by education and retired CEO of the RWE-DEA oil company, decided to establish a Foundation under his name, dedicated to neuroscience research under the roof of the German ‘Stifterverband’. It was in the late summer of 2003 when the Foundation was given its current face. At that time, Armin Schram visited Heinrich Betz, then Director at the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research in Frankfurt, to invite him to become a scientific advisor of the Foundation and to discuss with him the funding modalities. “It was an unforgettable experience”, Heinrich Betz remembers his first meeting with Armin Schram, “as a layman he had acquired enormous knowledge about modern brain research, and he was absolutely enthusiastic about the arsenal of methods and technologies available now to gain deeper insights into the molecular mechanisms underlying brain function.” It was a wise decision on their part to set up a competitive program that supports pioneering DFG-style projects, primarily for applicants in the early stages of scientific independence. The projects should deal with curiosity-driven research in molecular and cellular neuroscience and could be unorthodox. Meanwhile 26 such projects have been or are currently being funded.

Armin Schram was always tightly affiliated with the German Neuroscience Society (NWG). Since 2009 the Schram Foundation Symposium is a steady satellite event of the biennial NWG Meetings. In 2011 Armin Schram became the first honorary member of the Society and in 2019 the NWG has included a ‘Schram Lecture’ delivered by a distinguished neuroscientist into its meeting program.

This special issue of NEUROFORUM is dedicated to the legacy of Armin Schram. An overview article by Schulte et al.

sketches the outstanding scientific achievements of 20 years of research supported by the Schram Foundation with topics ranging from cell fate determination during brain development to synaptic function and plasticity, and the formation and function of neuronal networks. This is followed by a series of articles presenting the progress of various Schram-funded projects addressing questions like “How to keep synapses functional” (Natalia Kononenko & Volker Haucke) and “How decades of curiosity-driven research on synapses lead to an understanding of disease mechanisms” (Ira Milesovic), “How optogenetics can be used to study worm behavior at a cellular level *in vivo*” (Alexander Gottschalk), “How angiogenic factors can influence brain development” (Carmen Ruiz de Almodovar and lab members) and “How memory engrams emerge during learning and how they are influenced by interneurons” (Jonas Sauer & Marlene Bartos). This special volume is rounded off by contributions from Marilen Macher, member of the Board of Trustees of the Schram Foundation, which take a look at the founder, the development of the foundation and current funding opportunities for neuroscientists through foundations that are members of the German Stifterverband.

We hope that you will enjoy browsing through this issue, and that it will raise your interest in the Schram Foundation and the exciting science that originated from Armin Schram’s enthusiasm for and commitment to our science. We would greatly appreciate to meet you during upcoming Schram Foundation events, such as the seventh Schram Foundation Symposium or the second Schram Lecture during the next biennial NWG Meeting in Göttingen. In particular, ambitious young scientists may feel stimulated to apply for a membership in the “Schram Family” by winning one of the future Schram Foundation Grants (presumably announced in 2022).

We thank Heinrich Betz and Marilen Macher for comments and for sharing memories from early times of the Schram Foundation. Finally, we want to thank the NWG and the Editorial Board of NEUROFORUM, in particular the Editor in chief, Petra Wahle, and the editorial officer, Susanne Hannig, for the opportunity to assemble this special issue and for their support.

Faithfully yours,

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