C. ROBERT CLONINGER, M.D. ’70, H.S. ’73

Alumni Achievement Award

C. Robert Cloninger, MD is an internationally recognized psychiatrist and expert on substance dependence and personality disorders. He is renowned for his pioneering research on the biological, psychological, genetic, social, and spiritual foundations of both mental health and illness.

Cloninger is known for his research on the genetics, neurobiology, and development of personality and personality disorders. He has also greatly increased the understanding of biological and genetic factors in addiction, particularly alcoholism, and the genetic epidemiology of other psychiatric illnesses, including schizophrenia and personality disorders. His recent work reveals that schizophrenia is not a single disease but a group of eight genetically distinct disorders — a finding that may pave the way for biomarker-based diagnosis and individualized treatment.

At the Sansone Family Center for Well-Being, Cloninger promotes what he calls an integrative approach to medical care in which physicians must consider physical, mental, spiritual, and social aspects of patients’ health and well-being. He and colleagues have devised a set of tests to assess personality traits associated with happiness, the results of which can be applied to guide treatment decisions.

With more than 40 years of experience to his credit, Cloninger is regarded as a superb physician-scientist. He has been honored by the American Psychiatric Association and the Finnish Psychiatric Association and received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Society for Psychiatric Genetics. He is a member of the National Academy of Science’s Institute of Medicine, a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and has been listed in America’s Top Doctors since 2002. He has received honorary degrees from Umea University and Gothenburg University, both in Sweden.

Cloninger received his bachelor’s degree in 1966 from the University of Texas, Austin. After earning his medical degree from Washington University in 1970 and completing residency training here, he joined the faculty in 1973. Today, he is the Wallace and Lucille K. Renard Professor of Psychiatry, director of the Center for Psychobiology of Personality, and director of the Sansone Family Center for Well-Being.

The Washington University Medical Center Alumni Association is pleased to present its Alumni Achievement Award to Dr. Cloninger.