

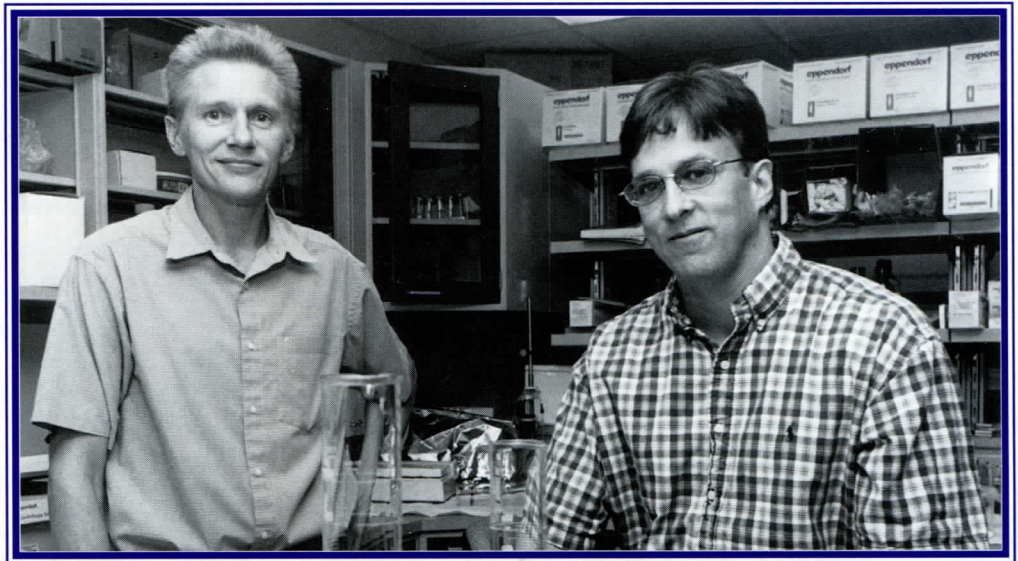
CORNERSTONE

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LSUHSC YOUNG INVESTIGATORS —

“A world class research center requires a critical mass of scientists doing outstanding work. The investigators profiled here represent some of the best minds in the country. An investment in these talented scientists will pay big dividends in terms of scientific discovery and in the LSUHSC research reputation.”

Dr. Nicolas Bazan



JEFFREY D. ERICKSON, PH.D.

JEFFREY C. MAGEE, PH.D.

If Jeff Erickson's parents had not intervened, the LSU Center for Excellence in Neuroscience might today lack the riches of this young man's talent. Jeff had left the University of Colorado at Boulder after two years of study, lured to his ancestral home of Norway. After six months, he became a commercial fisherman in the Arctic Ocean of northern Norway. Two years after his arrival, Jeff had so immersed himself in his work and the dialects of that area that Norwegians refused to believe he was not a native. That ability to absorb information, coupled with a love of logic, a quest for truth and discovery, and a motivation to succeed forecast Jeff's success in his future career.

“The idea of continuing as a commercial fisherman appealed to me – the travel, the adventure,” Jeff said. “But I heard my parents' advice, and resumed my education at Boulder, where I joined a work-study program in research.

“My father is with the American Cancer Society in public relations, so I thought I might enjoy biomedical research in that area,” Jeff said. “Since nothing was available at that time, I asked to work in a lab in the School of Pharmacy. I had to meet my obligations in the classroom, but my work in the lab drove me. My experiments in Colorado examined the transport of neurotransmitters into synaptic vesicles. That's what I do today.

“When I began research at Colorado, scientists were hampered in their efforts to measure neurotransmitter transport into vesicles purified from the brain,” Jeff said. “They did not consider the normal cytoplasm, or the living substance, inside the cells, and were suspending them in buffers not

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Jeff Magee has an edge on a lot of folks in neuroscience research, according to his colleague Jeff Erickson. “He is in a hot area of technical expertise, and because of his technical skill, he can do what most other people can't do.” Jeff Magee chooses to do what he does best — at LSU Health Sciences Center.

Born in north Louisiana, Jeff grew up in Dallas. In his last two years in high school, his family moved to Baton Rouge. Since then, he has confined his studies and his life to areas defined by Interstate 10. After a concentration in zoology and philosophy at LSU, Jeff came downriver to Tulane for a doctorate in physiology. He headed west again after Tulane for post-doctoral work at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

At Baylor, his work with Daon Johnston in neurophysiology had a major impact on Jeff and shaped what he does today. Jeff participated in a significant breakthrough in the study of dendrites, the tree-like parts of neurons that were until recently something of a mystery. Using new techniques in microscopy and imaging, he worked on discoveries that changed the concept of how neurons work.

The language of neuroscience might confound lay people. Neuro-vocabulary includes neurons, axons, dendrites, synapses, ion channels and the inputs and outputs that give them action. This language provides a short cut that eases the exchange of ideas and information among scientists, especially in studies at the basic cellular level.

Cellular neurophysiology, or information processing and storage in single neurons, has been Jeff's research passion for the past 15 years. A

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