

## AWARDS &amp; HONORS

## Dr. Ruth Nussenzweig Receives American Society of Tropical Medicine's First Medal Named for a Woman

by Office of Communications | 11:19 AM | Wednesday, November 29, 2017 | [Share](#) | [6 Likes](#)



The American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH) awarded its first medal named for a woman to tropical medicine icon Ruth Nussenzweig, MD, PhD, research professor of pathology, and professor emerita of microbiology and pathology (*pictured left*).

The Clara Southmayd Ludlow medal recognizes honorees of either gender for their inspirational and pioneering spirit, and whose work has advanced tropical medicine despite obstacles.

For decades, Dr. Nussenzweig has been dedicated to research that has led to the prevention, cure, or treatment of human diseases.

In the 1960s, Dr. Nussenzweig helped direct NYU Langone Health's malaria research program, helping overturn the common assumption that malaria parasites were too complex to vaccinate against. In a major breakthrough, she discovered that irradiated sporozoites, the infectious components of the malaria parasite, could make mice immune to malaria.

She and her husband, Victor Nussenzweig, MD, PhD, research professor and professor emeritus of pathology, uncovered the major target for a malaria vaccine: a protein on the surface of malaria sporozoites called circumsporozoite, or CSP. This protein contains a central large domain with repetitive amino acids that is now included in malaria vaccines.



*Above, the medal awarded to Dr. Nussenzweig, named after Clara Southmayd Ludlow.*

The ASTMH is the largest international scientific organization of experts dedicated to reducing the worldwide burden of tropical infectious diseases and improving global health. The ASTMH Council recognized the absence of an honorary medal named after a woman, and named the award after Clara Southmayd Ludlow (1852–1924), the ASTMH's first female member and its first member who did not have a medical degree, who advanced the understanding of tropical medicine, overcoming the odds of age, gender, and skepticism of women in the sciences.

---