

Gerty Theresa Cori 1896 – 1957



The Gerty Cori story continues to live on as many students of today study the “Cori Cycle” found in current biology and biochemistry textbooks. Her role in this discovery involves overcoming many obstacles including gender discrimination and nepotism rules; yet she was not hindered in her dedication to carrying out medical research as a lifelong pursuit.

Some of her accomplishments and awards follow.

- In 1947, Gerty was the third woman to win a Nobel Prize in science; however, she was the first American to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.
- Her research, which led to the Nobel Prize, was done in collaboration with her husband, Carl Cori, and was based on “their discovery of the course of the catalytic conversion of glycogen”. (Co-recipients of this Nobel Prize were Carl Cori and an Argentinian physiologist, Bernardo Houssay.)
- She and Carl discovered an intermediate compound that enabled the breakdown of glycogen, called glucose-1-phosphate, now known as the Cori ester.
- In 1953, Gerty was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
- Gerty was the fourth woman elected to the National Academy of Sciences.
- She was a lifelong board member of the National Science Foundation, appointed by President Harry S. Truman.
- In 2008, she was honored by the release of a US Postal Service stamp, one of a set of four honoring American Scientists. The stamp was issued, as scheduled, despite a small error in the chemical formula of the Cori ester that accompanied her picture.

References:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerty_Cori

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