

## **Dr. Bronya Keats**

Dr. Keats is a founding member of FARA's Board of Directors and its Scientific Review Committee. As one of the three scientists on that Committee, she has helped oversee the peer-review process for all the research grant applications submitted to the organization. For much of the last couple of years, in fact, she has served as Acting Chairperson of the Scientific Review Committee and has devoted a great deal of her time to managing the peer-review process, assembling its results, and making consequent recommendations to the Board of Directors. FA families everywhere owe a debt of gratitude to this outstanding scientist and friend.



Born in Adelaide, South Australia, Dr. Keats has made her home in the United States since 1977. She earned both her B.Sc. and Ph.D (Human Population Genetics) from the Australian National University. She is Board certified in Medical Genetics with a specialty in Clinical Molecular Genetics. She is Professor and Head of the Department of Genetics, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC), and Director of the Molecular and Human Genetics Center of Excellence, LSUHSC. She is also founding Director of the Center of Acadiana Genetics and Hereditary Health Care, which operates from LSUHSC.

That center was established in 1999 with the help of a federal funding initiative spearheaded by U.S. Congressman Billy Tauzin. The Center provides clinical services needed to address the diseases that especially afflict the Acadian population. For example, "Cajuns" experience Friedreich's ataxia and Usher Syndrome (deaf-blindness) at a rate about two and a half times greater than the general population.

Dr. Keats is President Elect of the Association of Professors of Human and Medical Genetics, and is a Member of the National Advisory Council of the National Institute for Genome Research of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). She is also a former Member of the National Advisory Council of the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.

Dr. Keats has long been a leading scientific investigator in the search for genetic markers for hereditary diseases. She has made significant contributions to such searches in FA, Usher syndrome, Tay Sachs disease, and various hearing disorders. She has been awarded research grants by the NIH, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the Marriott Foundation, the Foundation Fighting Blindness, National Ataxia Foundation, Retinitis Pigmentosa Foundation, and the Deafness Research Foundation. She serves in important positions of a host of professional organizations and has innumerable publications in the finest medical journals.

Dr. Keats helped immensely in laying the scientific foundation for FARA. She helped get the organization on its "scientific feet," define its mission and set its course. She played a central role in both of the international FA scientific conferences (1999 & 2003) FARA co-funded and co-hosted with NIH, chairing critical sessions in both. Her unselfish devotion to the work of FARA's Scientific review Committee in advancing the FA research portfolio has been invaluable. She has helped keep FARA's compass set in the direction of the most meritorious science that will lead to treatments and a cure.

Dr. Bronya Keats has earned the respect and gratitude of FA families around the world. We are deeply in her debt.