Julius Axelrod

NIH Eminent Scientist Profiles

Julius "Julie" Axelrod (1912–2004)

Julius Axelrod, Ph.D., was best known for his work on brain chemistry in the early 1960s that led to modern-day treatments for depression and anxiety disorders, for which he shared one-third of the 1970 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine. Prior to this, he developed the use of acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain management, with Bernard Brodie at Goldwater Memorial Hospital. His storied career at the NIH began in 1949 when he arrived at what was then known as the National Heart Institute (now National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute). He did not pursue and earn his Ph.D. for many years after this, when he was in his 40s. Aside from the Nobel, Dr. Axelrod's research was recognized by the 1967 Canada Gairdner Award and election to the National Academy of Sciences in 1971 and the National Academy of Medicine in 1980.

The Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum has gathered the following growing list of resources concerning Dr. Axelrod:

Dr. Axelrod's Own Reflections

- Interview with Marshall Nirenberg and Bernhard Witkop for National Institute of Health Oral History Project, 2003 (PDF, 89 kB)
- More reflections on a career in science in Journal of Biological Chemistry, 2003 (PDF, 197 kB)
- First Interview with Martin Flavin for NIH Oral History Project, 1996 (PDF, 61 kB)
- Second Interview with Martin Flavin for NIH Oral History Project, 1996 (PDF, 82 kB)
- Reflections on research at NIH in Perspectives in Biology and Medicine, 1986 (PDF, 638 kB)
- Reflections on the research scientist's career in Annual Review of Pharmacology and Toxicology, 1988 (PDF, 2 mB)
- Banquet speech at Nobel Prize ceremony, 1970 (PDF, 366 kB)

NIH Publications

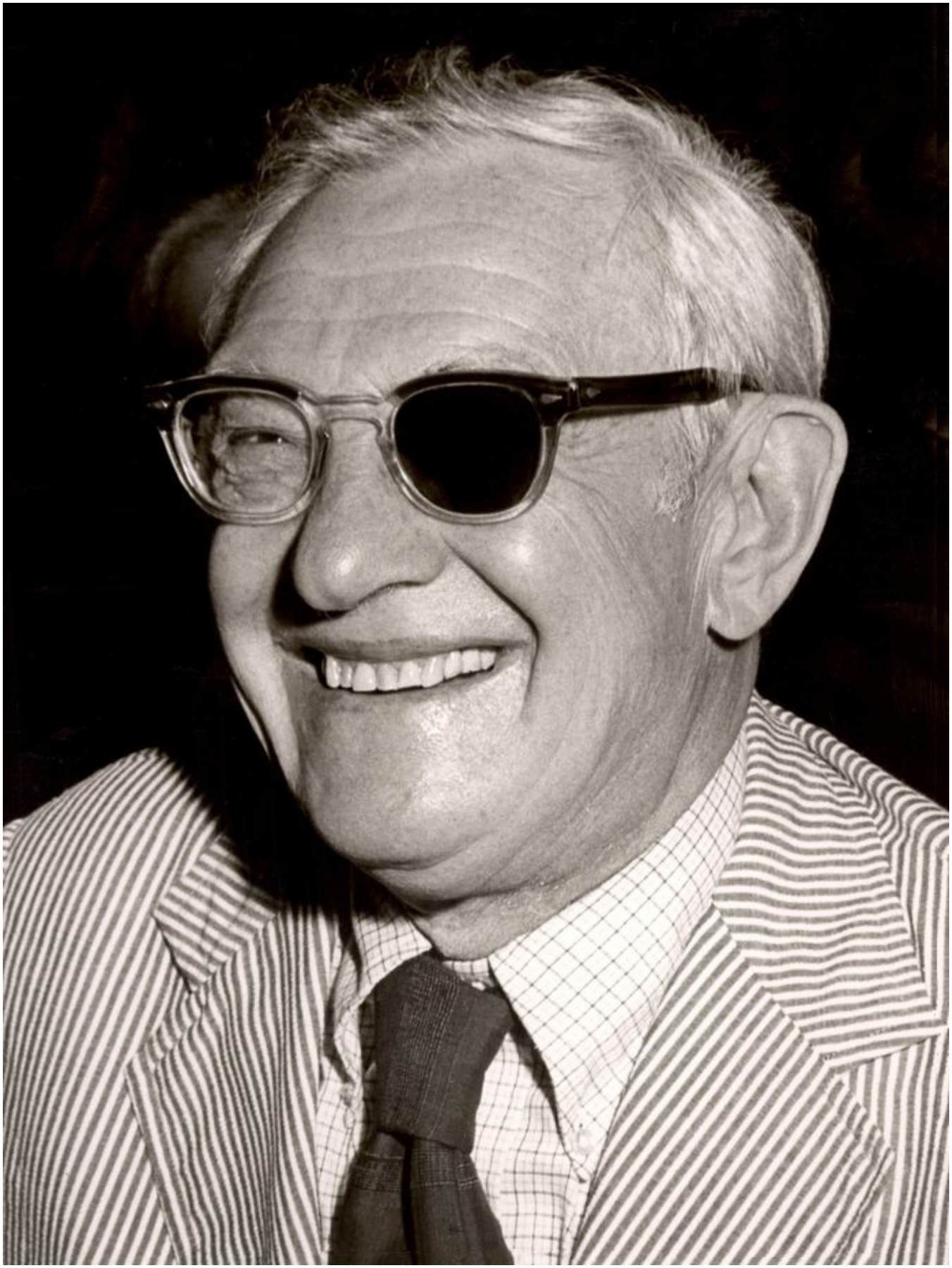
- Brief biographical introduction to Axelrod papers at National Library of Medicine, 2006
- Obituary in NIH Record, 2005 (PDF, 202 kB)
- Announcement of Nobel Prize Award in NIH Record, 1970 (PDF, 16 mB)

Journal Publications

- Tribute obituary by Solomon H. Snyder in Nature, 2005 (PDF, 104 kB)
- Tribute obituary by J.T. Coyle in Molecular Psychology, 2005 (PDF, 64 kB)

Non-journal Publications

- Memorial biography by Solomon H. Snyder for National Academy of Science, 2005 (PDF, 1029 kB)
- Obituary in Washington Post, 2004 (PDF, 221 kB)
- Biographical excerpt from Nobel lectures including presentation speeches and laureates' biographies: physiology or medicine 1963–1970, 1970 (PDF, 305 kB)
- Article in Jewish Telegraph Agency, 1970 (PDF, 263 kB)



Julius Axelrod National Institutes of Health