

Bio, Professor Karl Skorecki

Prof. Skorecki, Director of Nephrology and Molecular Medicine at the Technion's Faculty of Medicine, has made headlines around the world with his groundbreaking stem cell and genetic research.

Prof. Skorecki and his research team have developed a novel experimental model using stem cells to advance cancer research and to test anti-cancer therapies. More recently, his team discovered that some 3.5 million, or 40 per cent, of Ashkenazi Jews are descended from four "founding mothers" who lived in Europe 1,000 years ago. In 1997, Prof. Skorecki made another landmark discovery in genetics, when he found evidence indicating that the majority of modern-day Jewish priests, *kohanim*, are descended from a single common male ancestor. Not only have his findings been of great historical interest, but they also have important implications for understanding the mechanisms of genetic health and disease in human populations.

The only child of Holocaust survivors, Prof. Skorecki was born and raised in Toronto. He received his medical degree from the University of Toronto in 1977 and conducted his post-graduate clinical and research training at the Brigham and Women's and Massachusetts General Hospitals. In 1984, he established a research program in the areas of kidney disease, molecular biology and human genetics at the University of Toronto, Division of Nephrology. He was subsequently appointed professor and director of the Division of Nephrology in the Departments of Medicine, Pediatrics, and Clinical Biochemistry at the University of Toronto, and research scientist and director of the Nephrology Division at the Hospital for Sick Children, also in Toronto.

After a sabbatical at the Weizmann Institute in 1991, Prof. Skorecki and his family decided to make aliyah to Israel and he joined the Rambam and Technion faculty in 1995. In addition to conducting research in molecular biology and human genetics, Prof. Skorecki serves as Director of the Rappaport Research Institute at the Technion, and has served as Director of Nephrology at Rambam Medical Center in Haifa from 1995-2005, where he now serves as Director of Medical and Research Development.

Prof. Skorecki's innovative work has helped attract numerous graduate students and research fellows, and funding from major international agencies. He has published his research results in numerous professional publications, and has delivered lectures at international scientific meetings and conferences throughout the world. In addition, Prof. Skorecki has received several prizes for his research and biomedical innovations, as well as university and international teaching awards.

Prof. Skorecki and his wife, Linda, have five children and ten grandchildren, all of whom live in Israel.