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Mary C. Farach-Carson Named Recipient of the 2026 IADR Distinguished Scientist Award in Salivary Research

Alexandria, VA, USA – The International Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (IADR) has announced Mary C. Farach-Carson as the 2026 recipient of the IADR Distinguished Scientist Award in Salivary Research. Farach-Carson, from UTHealth Houston, was recognized during the Opening Ceremonies of the 104th General Session of the IADR, which was held in conjunction with the 55th Annual Meeting of the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research and the 50th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association for Dental Research on March 25-28, 2026 in San Diego, CA, USA.

Farach-Carson is an internationally recognized leader in extracellular matrix biology, tissue engineering, and translational regenerative medicine. Her research integrates extracellular matrix biology with salivary tissue engineering, cancer metastasis, and musculoskeletal biology. Her work has revealed multiple functions of ECM components in organizing stem/progenitor cell microstructures, guiding cell migration, and modulating tumor-stroma interactions. More recently, she has developed biomimetic hydrogels and 3D culture systems to enhance salivary gland tissue organization, tested human salivary cell implants in immunosuppressed miniswine, and systematically mapped core Matrisome gene expression across tissues. Her lab also investigates ECM-mediated regulation of metastatic prostate cancer and explores mechanisms of viral entry into salivary epithelia. Together, these studies advance regenerative therapies, tissue engineering, and the understanding of ECM-driven disease processes.

Currently, as Associate Dean for Research at UTHealth Houston, Farach-Carson oversees research programs and initiatives, fostering growth across basic, clinical, and translational domains. She also directs the school's Clinical and Translational Research program, advancing partnerships that bring innovative therapies, devices, and diagnostics from the laboratory to patient care.

Farach-Carson is a Fellow of both the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering (AIMBE). Her numerous honors include the Stephen M. Krane Award from the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research and the Translational STARS Award from the University of Texas System. She is also deeply committed to mentoring, faculty development, and promoting excellence in interdisciplinary research.

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Supported by Unilever Oral Care, the Salivary Research Award was designed to stimulate and recognize outstanding and innovative achievements that have contributed to the basic understanding of the salivary gland structure, secretion, and function, or salivary composition and function. It is one of the 17 IADR Distinguished Scientist Awards and one of the highest honors bestowed by the IADR.

About IADR

The International Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (IADR) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to drive dental, oral, and craniofacial research for health and well-being worldwide. IADR represents the individual scientists, clinician-scientists, dental professionals, and students based in academic, government, non-profit, and private-sector institutions who share our mission. Learn more at www.iadr.org.