Gregory A. Petsko, D.Phil.
Professor of Neurology, Ann Romney Center for Neurologic Diseases
Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women’s Hospital

Truth Sometimes Triumphs:  
A History of Structural Enzymology

Time: Thursday November 4th • 2:00-3:00pm EDT
Zoom link: go.rutgers.edu/m87soywy

Gregory A. Petsko, D.Phil., is Professor of Neurology at the Ann Romney Center for Neurologic Diseases in the Department of Neurology at Harvard Medical School and Brigham & Women's Hospital in Boston. Petsko received his BA from Princeton University, summa cum laude, in 1970, and his D. Phil. from Oxford University (which he attended as a Rhodes Scholar) in Molecular Biophysics in 1973. He was Professor of Chemistry at MIT from 1978 until 1990, when he moved to Brandeis University. From there, he joined Weill Cornell Medical College in 2012 and moved to Harvard Medical School and Brigham & Women’s Hospital in Boston in 2019.

Petsko has received numerous awards and honors, including election to the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Medicine, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society. He has an honorary Doctor of Laws from Dalhousie University. He is Past-President both of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and of the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and past Chair of the Medical Sciences Section of the AAAS.

His scientific contributions are broad ranging. As a graduate student, Petsko determined the first three-dimensional structure of the enzyme triosephosphate isomerase (PDB ID 1tim), laying the foundation for a two decade-long foray into studies of enzyme action at the atomic level viewed through the lens of X-ray crystallography – the topic of this special lecture. More recently, his research efforts have been focused on discovering new treatments for age-related neurodegenerative diseases, including Lou Gehrig’s (ALS), Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases, and the development of better models for brain disorders.

Petsko’s public lectures on aging of the population and its implications for human health have attracted a wide audience in person and on the Internet (one of his TED talks, for example, has been viewed over a million times). For many years he has also written a widely-read and much reprinted column on science and society, the first ten years of which are available in book form.