

# Survival and making it to tenure at NIH: “What a long strange trip its been”

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- How do you get there at NIH?
- How do you stay there?
- What's the process
- Tricks to Tenure

# How I got here: From a handshake to a headache

## The Handshake

Deputy?



Lab Chief

Investigator

Section Head

# Route to Tenure-Track I: Full Search



- Search Committee from NIH and outside
- Completely open, “the fix” is not on
- Several are interviewed
- Lab Chief must hire from the list (top 3-4)

# Route to Tenure-Track II: Stadtman Searches

- Started in 2010
- NIH Wide
- Not applying to specific position or institute
- Topic driven
  - Immunology
  - Cell biology
  - Etc
- SDs then select and create positions

## Route to Tenure-Track III: Got it. Now what?



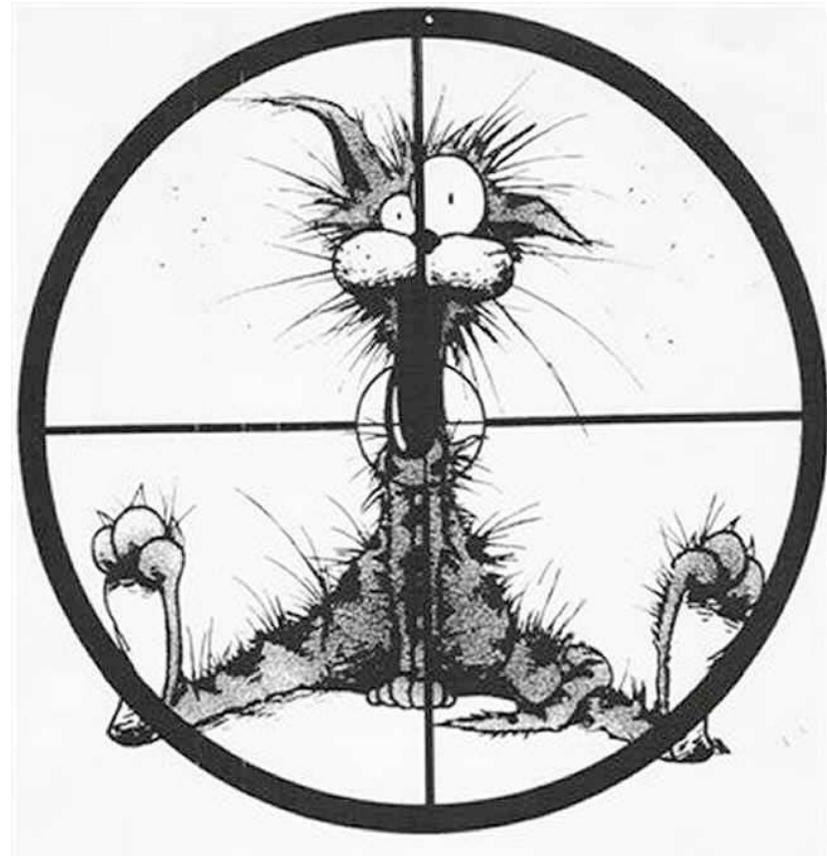
Results in negotiation of official contracts:

- Personnel
- Budget
- Space

# Tenure-Track to Tenure

## First Stop-Site Visit

- Fully external review
- Entire program under review
  - Productivity (Publish)
  - Innovation and creativity
  - Community involvement
- 25 pages and 20 min
- Two significant outcomes
  - Continue
  - Discontinue on TT
- Their opinion must get a 2<sup>nd</sup> from BSC
- Lots of attrition here



- Must have at least 2 before going for Tenure (~6-7 years)

# Tenure-Track to Tenure The Second Critical Site Visit



More attrition here

# Tenure-Track to Tenure Second Stop, the Lab Chief



- Lab Chief must agree to “put you up”
- Prepares a letter asking for your tenure

# Tenure-Track to Tenure Third Stop-Letters

- Use a list provided by you (largely)
- Need 12-16
- Must be big people
- Must be good, no really.
- No response is bad for you



# Tenure-Track to Tenure

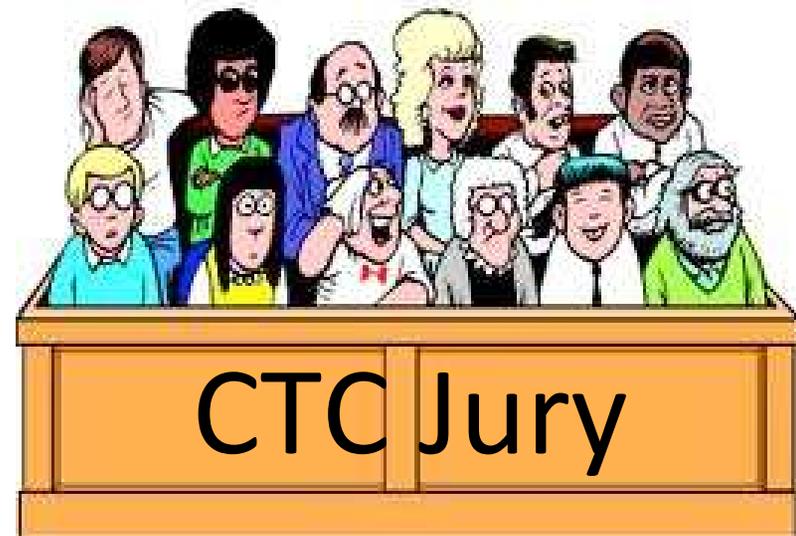
## Fourth Stop-Institute Promotion and Tenure Committee

- Review work
- Future plans (5 pg)
- Letters
- Presentation by you
- Vote
- Prepare a letter of support
  
- Lots of Attrition here



# Tenure-Track to Tenure VI: Last Stop-Central Tenure Committee (CTC)

- Committee from all NIH
  - Presentation by Lab Chief and SD
  - Your IC can talk but not vote
    - Review work
    - Future plans (5 pg)
    - Letters
    - Your institute letter
    - SD Letter
- You are not there!
- Secret Vote sent to Director of Intramural Research
- Success at CTC is pretty good (~90) the trick is getting here!

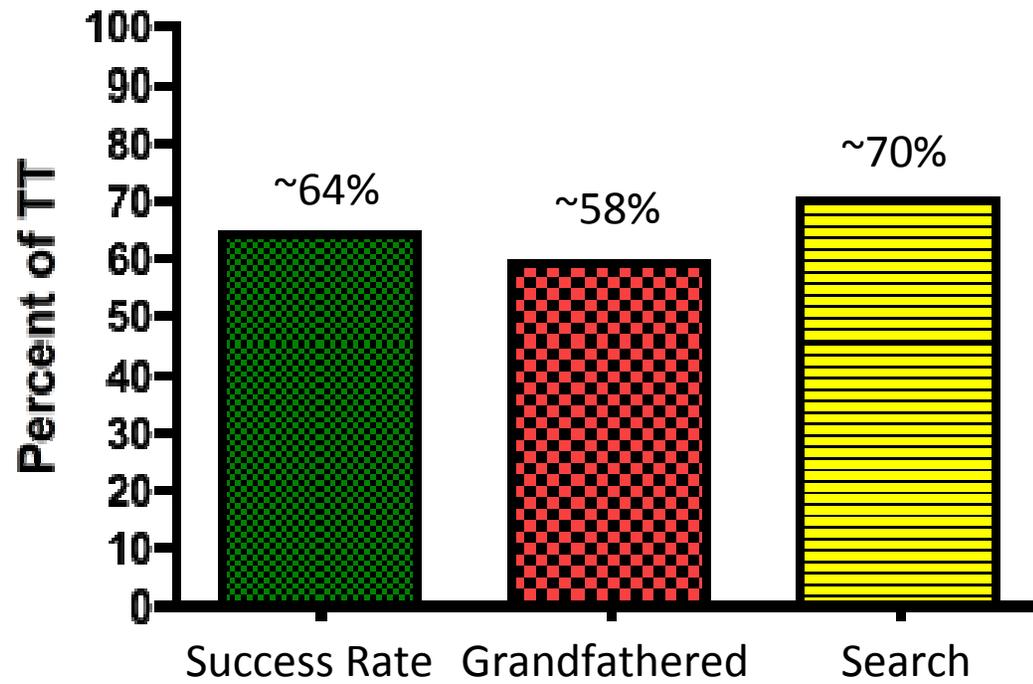


# Tenure-Track to Tenure V: Director of Intramural Research

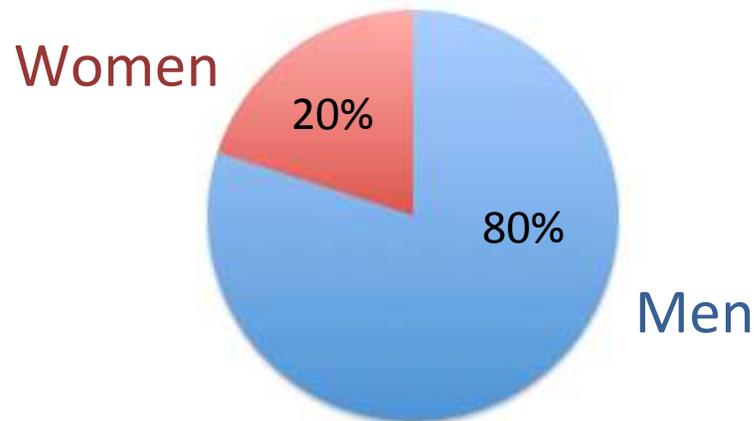
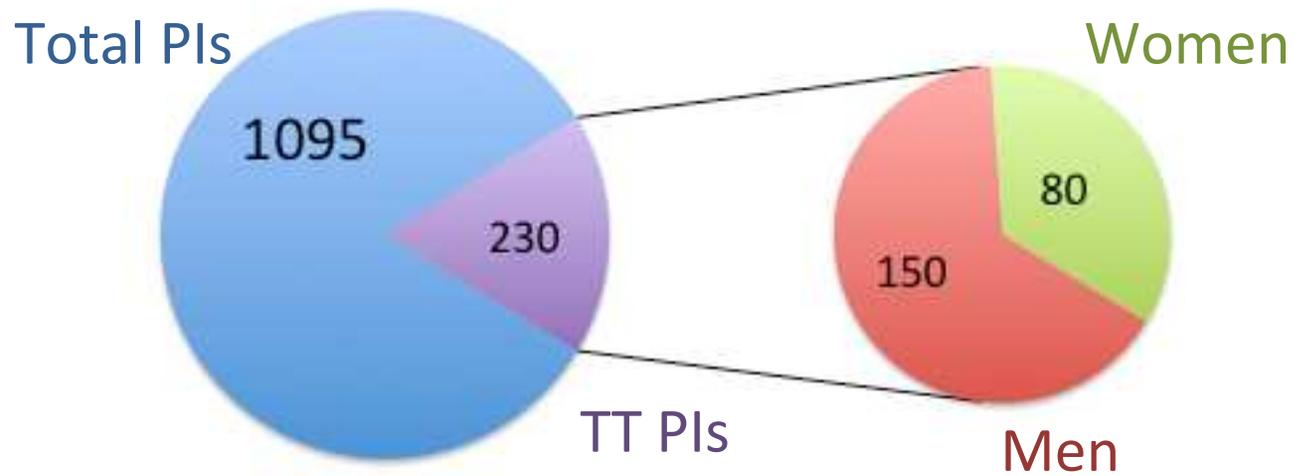
- Appointed by NIH Director
- Responsible for all intramural Research
- Does not have to take recommendation of CTC
  - (likes unanimous votes)
- Very little attrition here



# Overall Success Rate from Tenure-Track to Tenure NIH Wide

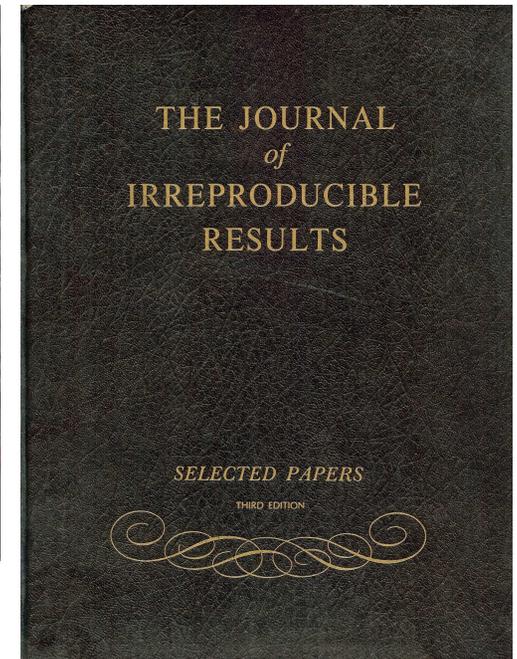


# Fewer Women on TT and even fewer are successful



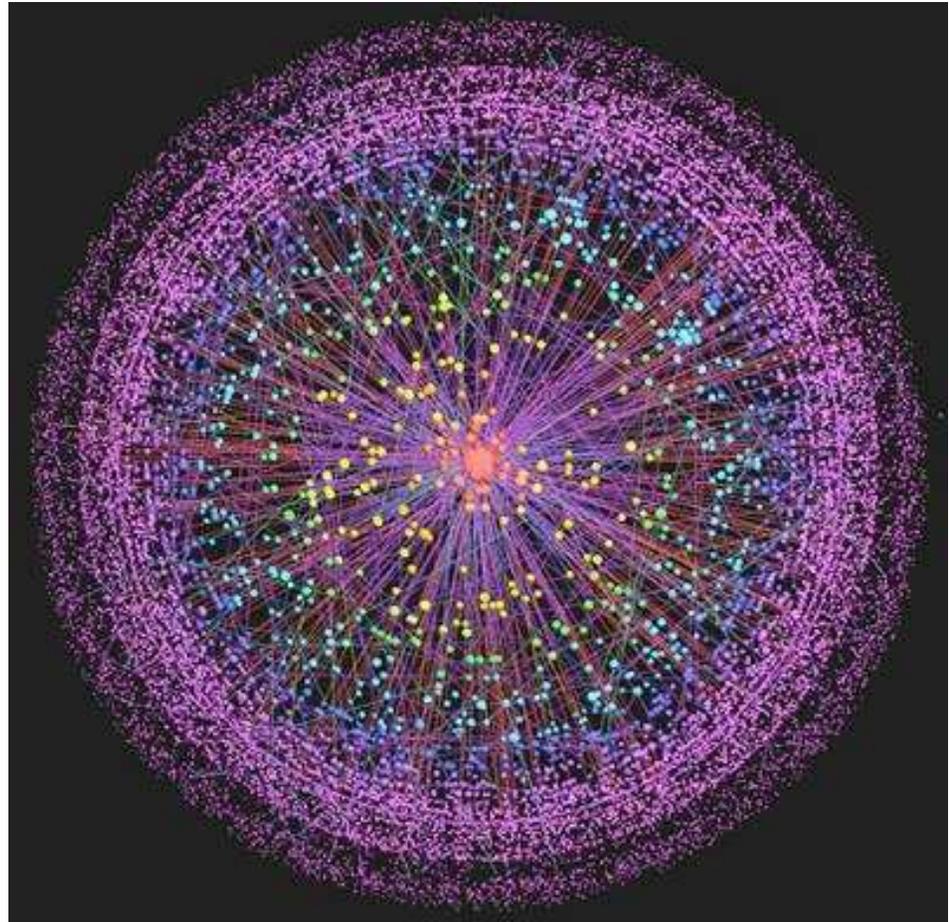
# Tricks to Tenure I

- Be very good!
  - Publish (double figure IF)
  - Survive site visits
  - Be improving, not peaked
  - Community involvement
- Network
  - Get help!
  - Collaborate\*
  - Get good people
  - Remember those Letters
- Develop Independence
  - Hold projects/reagents
- Build a good package



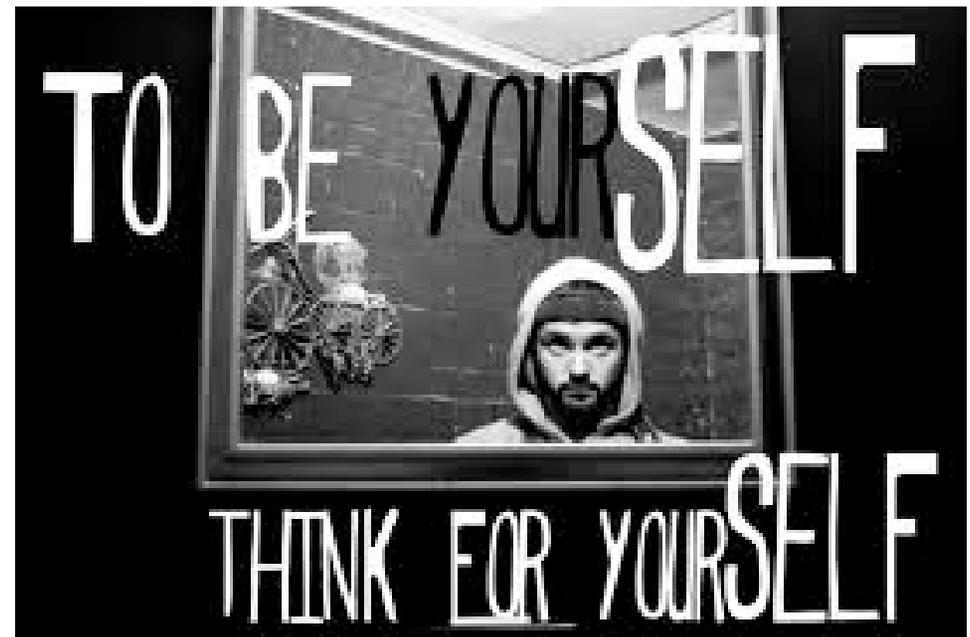
# Tricks to Tenure II

- Be very good!
  - Publish (double figure IF)
  - Survive site visits
  - Be improving, not peaked
  - Community involvement
- Network
  - Get help!
  - Get good people
  - Collaborate\*
  - Remember those Letters
- Develop Independence
  - Hold projects/reagents
- Build a good package



## Tricks to Tenure III

- Be very good!
  - Publish (double figure IF)
  - Survive site visits
  - Be improving, not peaked
  - Community involvement
- Network
  - Get help!
  - Collaborate\*
  - Get good people
  - Remember those Letters
- Develop Independence
  - Hold projects/reagents
- Build a good package



# Tricks to Tenure IV

- Be very good!
  - Publish (double figure IF)
  - Survive site visits
  - Be improving, not peaked
  - Community involvement
- Network
  - Get help!
  - Collaborate\*
  - Remember those Letters
- Develop Independence
  - Hold projects/reagents
- Build a good package





KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
GOOD  
LUCK