This research centre is named after Sir Sydney Brenner, the 2002 Nobel Laureate for Physiology or Medicine, who started his research career at Wits University and who agreed to have his name associated with the initiative. Sydney Brenner after completing his medical training at Wits University’s Medical School, went on to complete a D.Phil at Exeter College, Oxford University. Sydney Brenner (together with colleagues Francis Crick, Aaron Klug, Leslie Barnett, and ? Pieczenick) made many seminal contributions to molecular biology including contributions to elucidating the nature of the genetic code, proposing the concept of messenger RNA and demonstrating the coding requirements of protein translation. It was Brenner’s pioneering work in understanding the principles of animal and neural development using the nematode animal model system which earned him the Nobel Prize in 2002 (Physiology or Medicine) which he shared with Robert Horvitz and John Sulston. Sydney Brenner has worked at some of the most prestigious institutes and universities across the world including the Laboratory for Molecular Biology at Cambridge, and the Salk Institute. Sydney Brenner has described his remarkable scientific career in the book ‘Science’ edited by Lewis Wolpert, 2001. Errol Friedberg has also written a biography of Sydney Brenner which has been published by Cold Spring Harbour.

In receiving the Nobel Prize, Sydney Brenner remarked that choosing the right organism was as important as choosing the right problem to work on (maybe put quote?). In keeping with his research throughout his life the SBIMB will promote relevant and original biomedical research to focus attention on the most pressing health issues affecting southern Africa’s populations. These health issues include diabetes and cancer. Understanding the molecular basis of biological phenomena has been the Sydney Brenner trademark approach. Under his banner and ambience it is hoped that his penchant for thoughtful approach.