



IBT Graduate Student Wins His Triple Crown

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Each spring the sport of horse racing can bestow the famous Triple Crown if one horse wins three special races. Even though Brad Bryan is a graduate student at the Institute of Biosciences and Technology, not a thoroughbred race horse, nevertheless he feels as if he has won his own Triple Crown.

In the month of April, Brad was honored three times. He won a graduate award from IBT for his research work, secured a postdoctoral position at Harvard University, and married another IBT graduate student who he had tried to woo since 2002. That's enough to make a guy whinny with joy.





Newlyweds Brad Bryan and Dianne Mitchell are often in their lab "home" on IBT's fifth floor.

On April 29, Brad was one of four IBT graduate students presented with [research awards](#). He won the Dan and Barbara Clinton Prize for his work undertaken in the laboratory of Mingyao Liu, Ph.D., an associate professor in IBT's Center for Cancer Biology and Nutrition. At the celebration event, Brad detailed his research on the Rho family of small GTPases, proteins relevant in embryonic development.



Brad Bryan (right) accepts his award from IBT Director Dr. Richard Finnell.

This research made Brad a natural to pursue postgraduate work in the laboratory of Jeffrey Settleman, Ph.D., associate professor at Harvard Medical School and the Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center. Settleman's lab also investigates GTPases, which he describes as evolutionarily-conserved Ras-related proteins that are key regulators of cellular processes including proliferation, motility, adhesion, and shape change. The Settleman lab where Brad will work in Boston uses biochemical and genetic approaches to understand the normal regulation and function of Rho proteins and addresses their role in human cancer.

In August, Brad will move from Houston to Boston. His new bride, Dianne Mitchell, will join him later, after she completes her cancer-related research work under a grant from the Department of Defense. Both 27, Brad and Dianne met as graduate students in College Station, where he studied biochemistry and she studied genetics.

"I tried to talk to her, but she ignored me," Brad says. "I was shy then," Dianne explains. Kismet finally struck when, after moving to IBT in Houston, they both landed in Dr. Liu's lab.

"We worked in different sections of the lab, but Brad kept asking me out for lunch. I finally agreed, and then we discovered we had so much in common." They began dating in June 2004, were engaged six months later, and wed on April 16 this year in Broaddus, Texas.

Brad points out that when the subject of marriage came up, Dianne agreed right away. Dianne laughs and says, "Well, when you know something is right, then you know it."

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