R. Douglas Fields, Ph.D., is Chief of the Nervous System Development and Plasticity Section at the National Institutes of Health, NICHD, in Bethesda, Maryland, USA. His long-standing interest is in how environmental experience and functional activity affect the developing structure and function of the nervous system and the cellular mechanisms of learning and memory. His current research emphasis is on neuron-glia interactions and in particular on regulation of myelination by impulse activity. In addition, his research explores synaptic plasticity (LTP, LTD, and homeostatic plasticity), and regulation of gene expression by specific patterns of action potentials. He was founder and Editor-in-Chief of the journal Neuron Glia Biology from 2004-2011, and he serves on the editorial board of Glia, Scientific Reports, Neuroscience Letters, The Neuroscientist, Frontiers in Neuroscience, and scientific advisor to Scientific American Mind.