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03.16.2006

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Not since the infamous Scopes "monkey" trial of the 1920s has the controversy over the teaching of evolution exposed deep divides between sections of the American public. The Kansas Board of Education's announcement that intelligent design would be taught alongside evolution ignited a nationwide debate over what constitutes science education and what are actually nonscientific approaches to education. At a time when many studies show that the U.S. lags behind other countries in the quality of its science education, the definition of what science education is and what it is not has more serious ramifications than ever before.

What are the basic tenets of the concept of evolution and how does understanding evolution play an essential role in comprehending science, and in particular, modern biology? How can science educators from elementary schools to college campuses respond to challenges from those who claim that intelligent design is as valid a theory as evolution? How can we prepare and support teachers so that they will be able to teach evolution effectively despite the controversy? How can state and local officials in charge of education policy respond to attempts by religious groups and others who seek to change the investigative nature of science education?

To assist science educators from all levels of American education as well as state and local education officials responsible for their schools' science curriculum respond effectively to the controversy surrounding the teaching of evolution, the New York Academy of Sciences will present a two-day symposium, [Teaching Evolution and the Nature of Science](#) [4], on Friday-Saturday, April 21-22, 2006, at the Gerald W. Lynch Theater, John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

Among the goals of this symposium are: (1) to provide science educators with the tools, both rhetorical and scientific, that will help them deal with issues relating to the delivery of science education; (2) enable science teachers to increase science literacy and develop skills of scientific inquiry among their students; (3) ensure that students understand that evidence is a necessary component of the scientific process; and (4) discuss the investigative nature of science, and how to recognize approaches to the teaching of science that reflect non-scientific propositions.

Among the eleven researchers and educators scheduled to speak are:

- **Glenn Branch**, National Center for Science Education
Topic: "Academic Infiltration of Intelligent Design"
- **Bruce Alberts**, UCSF and Past-President, NAS

Topic: "Discovery and Evolution of Protein Machines That Make Life Possible"

- **John Haught**, Professor of Theology, Georgetown University

Topic: "Evolution and Religion: What are the Issues?"

- **Kenneth R. Miller**, Professor of Biology, Brown University

Topic: "Science, Darwin and Design: Teaching Evolution in a Climate of Controversy"

- **Robert T. Pennock**, Professor of Philosophy, Michigan State University

Topic: "The Nature of Science"

- **Jennifer Miller**, Biology Teacher, Dover High School

Topic: "Teaching Evolution at Dover High School"

The symposium is geared towards secondary school science teachers; college faculty of science and science education; state and local officials who have responsibility for education policy; and all others with an interest in evolution, education and the nature of science.

Support for this conference came from the Wenner-Gren Foundation.

Seating is limited. To RSVP, please contact Jennifer Tang, Manager of Media Relations, at 212.838.0230 x257 or email jtang@nyas.org [5].

Founded in 1817, the New York Academy of Sciences is an independent, non-profit organization of more than 24,000 members serving science, technology and society worldwide.

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