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## [Stanley Miller dies](#) [3]

Stanley Miller, a pioneer in scientific research on the origin of life, died on May 20, 2007, at the age of 77, in National City, California. Born in Oakland, California, in 1930, Miller received his bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1951, and his doctorate from the University of Chicago in 1954. As a graduate student at Chicago under the supervision of Harold C. Urey, he conducted his famous experiment demonstrating the abiotic synthesis of organic compounds under conditions resembling those of the early earth; he published a [report](#) [4] (PDF) in the journal *Science* in 1953. After a postdoctoral year at Caltech and five years at Columbia, he joined the faculty at the University of California, San Diego, where he spent the rest of his productive scientific career. He was a member of the National Academy of Sciences and was awarded the Oparin Medal from the International Society of the Study of the Origin of Life in 1983.

Miller's experiment ushered in a new era of experimental studies of prebiological chemistry. Moreover, according to Jeffrey D. Bada, one of Miller's graduate students who is now himself a leading expert on the origin of life, "The public's imagination was captivated by the outcome of the experiment ... By the time the results were corroborated by an independent group three years later, the metaphor of the 'prebiotic soup' had found its way into comic strips, cartoons, movies and novels" (as [quoted](#) [5] in UCSD's obituary for Miller). Biology textbooks came to feature a diagram of Miller's apparatus and a brief explanation of its significance. Unsurprisingly, creationists have repeatedly attacked both the textbook presentation and the scientific research itself; see [chapter 1](#) [6] of Alan Gishlick's *Icons of Evolution?* for a detailed rebuttal of one such attack. Meanwhile, scientific research on the origin of life continues to advance, thanks in large part to the pioneering work of Stanley Miller.

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