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The Friend of Darwin award recognizes rapper, writer, and educator for their unstinting defense of evolution

Some Friends of Darwin are center stage—literally. Others work quietly behind the scenes, nudging, cajoling, and otherwise "herding butterflies" to get things done. Still others defend science with books, lectures, and crackerjack research.



The fellow in the spotlights—and a winner of NCSE's 2013 Friend of Darwin award—is Baba Brinkman, who brought rap (and Darwin) to Broadway. "Baba didn't start Baba Brinkmanout in science—he was recruited to the cause by Professor Mark Pallen" says NCSE's executive director Genie Scott. Pallen saw Baba's rap version of the Canterbury Tales and urged Baba to tackle Darwin. "The Rap Guide to Evolution" became a hit, eventually appearing Off-Broadway, garnering Baba a 2012 Drama Desk Award nomination. Baba has performed his shows for thousands of students of all ages. Said one science teacher, "One hour of Baba is worth a dozen lectures".

"It's impressive just how much science comes through in his Darwin rap," says Scott. "It's accurate, it's wildly funny, and it connects with audiences scientists rarely reach."



The man behind the scenes—and likewise a winner of this year's Friend of Darwin award—is Dr. Jay Labov, Senior Advisor for Education and Dr. Jay Labov Communication for the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and the National Research Council. Labov has worked tirelessly to protect, explain, and nurture evolution education, wielding his influence to ensure the Academy remains a strong advocate for evolution and a strong foe of science denial.

"When there's a creationist flare-up and we need help from the NAS, Jay delivers," says Genie Scott. "He's NCSE's go-to guy."

Perhaps just as important, Labov led the charge to create the NAS's booklet *Science, Evolution, and Creationism*. The book, said one reviewer, "covers material that everybody should understand about evolution and creationism...written in a beautifully clear, concise language, [it] may be the shortest intelligible explanation of evolution that you'll ever read".



Last but not lost is our third Friend of Darwin: biologist and author Dr. Sean B. Carroll. Carroll has been enlightening the public about evolution for nearly two decades, via his long-running column in *The New York Times*, his memorable videos for the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, a NOVA special (*What Darwin Never Knew*), and a half dozen popular books, including *From DNA to Diversity*, *The Making of the Fittest*, and *Endless Forms Most Beautiful*.

"Sean isn't just a superb communicator," says Genie Scott. "He's a leading researcher in evolutionary developmental biology, a member of the National Academy of Science, and a VP of Science Education at HHMI, a scientist equally comfortable in the lab or engaging high school students in science."

MEDIA NOTE: For images of the Friend of Darwin award, Sean B. Carroll, Baba Brinkman, and Jay Labov, go to our press image [page](#). [4]

Videos: Baba Brinkman

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Videos/podcasts: Sean B. Carroll

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