

SIGMA XI CHAPTER NEWS RELEASE TEMPLATE

Chapter contact:

_____ (Name)

_____ (Title)

_____ (Institution)

_____ (Phone)

_____ (E-mail)



For Immediate Release

LOCAL SIGMA XI CHAPTER CELEBRATES SOCIETY'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY

In 2011, the _____ Chapter of Sigma Xi will celebrate the 125th anniversary of one of the oldest and largest scientific societies in the world.

Founded in 1886 at Cornell University, Sigma Xi is known as the international honor society for research scientists and engineers. Its distinguished membership has included Albert Einstein, Linus Pauling, DNA discoverers Francis Crick and James Watson, physicists Enrico Fermi and Richard Feynman and geneticist Barbara McClintock, along with more than 200 other Nobel laureates.

But Sigma Xi is more than an honor society, according to Executive Director Jerome F. Baker. "Our 520 chapters in North America and abroad contribute much to the intellectual life of their communities," he said. "Sigma Xi endeavors to nurture and promote original research in science and technology and an appreciation for how much science has done to advance human progress. Throughout our history, one of our primary aims has been to help create a collegial atmosphere in which research can thrive."

Sigma Xi chapters can be found at colleges and universities, government laboratories and industry research centers around the world. Many organize research conferences, serve as mentors and judges for regional science fairs, work with local schools to improve science education and sponsor public talks and forums on current topics in science, among other activities.

The _____ Sigma Xi Chapter was founded in _____. Over the years, its activities have included _____. [Further chapter history and quotes from officers/members.]

Chapter President _____ noted that, because its members represent all fields of science and engineering, Sigma Xi helps to break down barriers to fruitful collaborations.

That has never been more important, according to 2010-2011 Sigma Xi President Joseph A. Whittaker at Morgan State University. "The solution to many of the big problems society faces will require expertise from many different areas," he said. "Bringing scientists and engineers from diverse backgrounds together is one of Sigma Xi's main strengths."

Many people know Sigma Xi by its award-winning magazine, *American Scientist*. Since 1913, *American Scientist* has provided a window on fast-paced developments in science and technology. Sigma Xi also awards hundreds of grants annually to promising student researchers, helping to advance the careers of more than 30,000 since 1922.

The society's ethics guidebooks *Honor in Science* and *The Responsible Researcher: Paths and Pitfalls* are required reading in many graduate schools. Sigma Xi also produces a free, daily e-mail bulletin, *Science in the News*, highlighting science and technology stories from the mainstream media.

The society is at the forefront of the growing Science Café movement. These informal gatherings in restaurants, museums and pubs feature experts discussing current issues in science with members of the public.

A few highlights in Sigma Xi's history include:

* As early as 1888, Sigma Xi elected women to membership. And Julian Herman Lewis was inducted in 1913, two years before he became the first African American to receive a Ph.D. in physiology.

* After the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, three Sigma Xi members at Stanford University oversaw reconstruction of the campus. And the Berkeley Chapter led efforts to eradicate rats in the devastated city following reported cases of bubonic plague.

* In 1916, the National Research Council asked Sigma Xi to help organize research facilities in preparation for U.S. involvement in World War I.

* After World War II, Sigma Xi continued to play a prominent role in scientific affairs as the national research enterprise expanded.

* The society's centennial celebration in 1986 led to "A New Agenda for Science," with support from the National Science Foundation. This found expression in the 1990s through major forums on research ethics, science education and globalization, among other topics, and expansion of its international membership.

* Sigma Xi's landmark Postdoc Survey in 2005 and a 2007 UN Foundation/Sigma Xi report on Confronting Climate Change received widespread attention.

Sigma Xi has its headquarters in Research Triangle Park, N.C. Visit www.sigmaxi.org for more information.