

EMBARGOED UNTIL FEBRUARY 16, 2003

TEACH EVOLUTION!

Over two hundred scientists named Steve agree

Denver, Colorado, February 16, 2003 — A first-of-its-kind statement on evolution signed by over 200 scientists was unveiled today at the American Association for the Advancement of Science annual convention in Denver, Colorado, following Lawrence Krauss's topical lecture entitled "Scientific Ignorance as a Way of Life: From Science Fiction in Washington to Intelligent Design in the Classroom." The statement — sponsored by the National Center for Science Education (NCSE), a nonprofit organization that defends the teaching of evolution in the public schools — reads:

Evolution is a vital, well-supported, unifying principle of the biological sciences, and the scientific evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of the idea that all living things share a common ancestry. Although there are legitimate scientific debates about the patterns and processes of evolution, there is no serious scientific doubt that evolution occurred or that natural selection is a major mechanism of evolution. It is scientifically inappropriate and pedagogically irresponsible for creationist pseudoscience, including but not limited to "intelligent design," to be introduced into the science curricula of the public schools.

The 220 signatories are a distinguished group. Almost all hold PhDs in the sciences. They include two Nobel prize winners, eight members of the National Academy of Sciences, and several well-known authors of popular science books such as *Why We Age*, *Darwin's Ghost*, and *How the Mind Works*.

And they're all named Steve.

Eugenie C. Scott, the executive director of NCSE, explained the significance of the statement. "Creationists are fond of amassing lists of PhDs who deny evolution to try to give the false impression that evolution is somehow on the verge of being rejected by the scientific community. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Hundreds of scientists endorsed the NCSE statement. And we asked only scientists named Steve — who represent approximately 1% of scientists."

Steven Weinberg, professor of physics at the University of Texas, Austin, and recipient of the 1977 Nobel Prize in physics, added, "Of course science isn't decided by manifesto; this statement pokes fun at such efforts. If you want to know whether scientists accept evolution, you should look in the scientific literature. There you find that evolution is alive and well, as a central and unifying principle of science."

The statement comes in the wake of several recent attempts to undermine evolution education across the country, including in Ohio. Said Steve Rissing, professor of biology at Ohio State University, "I run what is perhaps the largest introductory biology program in the world. That people are misleading the public about the scientific standing of evolution not only saddens me but also makes my job harder."

Steven Pinker, professor of psychology at MIT, added, "The 220 Steves — and Stephanies — who signed the statement aren't trying to stifle dissent, of course. Anyone who did produce solid scientific evidence against evolution would become an instant superstar. The point of the statement is to demonstrate how misleading it is to claim, on the basis of a handful of dissenters, that evolution is a 'theory in crisis.'"

And why Steve? "In honor of the late Harvard zoologist and geologist Stephen Jay Gould, a valiant supporter of both evolution education and NCSE," NCSE's Scott explained. "We hope that the next time creationists present a list of 'scientific dissenters from evolution', reporters will ask, 'How many of them are named Steve?'"

The National Center for Science Education is a nonprofit organization, based in Oakland, California, dedicated to defending the teaching of evolution in the public schools. On the web at www.ncseweb.org.

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