



J. Craig Venter

J. Craig Venter, Ph.D., is regarded as one of the leading scientists of the 21st century for his invaluable contributions to genomic research. He is Founder and President of the J. Craig Venter Institute (JCVI), a not-for-profit research organization with more than 400 scientists and staff dedicated to human, microbial, plant, synthetic, and environmental genomic research, as well as the exploration of social and ethical issues in genomics. He is also founder and CEO of Synthetic Genomics Inc., a privately held company dedicated to developing and commercializing synthetic genomic advances. The company is currently focused on solving pressing societal needs such as producing new biofuels and biochemicals.

After a tour of duty as a Navy Corpsman in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968, Dr. Venter earned both a Bachelor's degree in Biochemistry and a Ph.D. in Physiology and Pharmacology from the University of California at San Diego. After leaving UCSD, he was appointed professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo and the Roswell Park Cancer Institute. In 1984, he moved to the National Institutes of Health campus where he developed Expressed Sequence Tags (ESTs,) a revolutionary new strategy for rapid gene discovery. In 1992 Dr. Venter founded The Institute for Genomic Research (TIGR), a not-for-profit research institute which was merged into the J. Craig Venter Institute in 2006. In 1995 he and his team at TIGR decoded the genome of the first free-living organism, the bacterium *Haemophilus influenzae*, using his new whole genome shotgun technique.

In 1998, Dr. Venter founded Celera Genomics to sequence the human genome with his new techniques. This research culminated with the February 2001 publication of the human genome in the journal, *Science*. He and his team there also sequenced the fruit fly, mouse and rat genomes.

In 2002, after leaving Celera, Dr. Venter and his team at the Venter Institute continued their pioneering work in various areas of genomics. He and his teams have published more than 50 genomes and numerous important papers covering such areas as environmental genomics, synthetic genomics and the first complete diploid genome.

Dr. Venter is the author of more than 200 scientific articles and the recipient of numerous honorary degrees, public honors, and scientific awards. He was awarded the 2002 Gairdner Foundation International Award and the 2001 Paul Ehrlich and Ludwig Darmstaedter Prize. He was also honored as one of TIME Magazine's "Most Influential People" in the Scientists

and Thinkers category in 2007 and 2008 and listed among Foreign Policy's "Public Intellectuals" in 2008. He was also one of the first 38 people to be selected by Desmond Tutu as part of the "Hands That Shape Humanity" world exhibition. Dr. Venter is a member of numerous prestigious scientific organizations including, including the National Academy of Sciences, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and American Society for Microbiology.

Dr. Venter's autobiography ***A Life Decoded*** was published in October of 2007.