

Trotter Lecture to Explore Crossroads of Faith, Science

Texas A&M University

Two prominent scientists - one, an evolutionary geneticist and molecular biologist who won the 2010 Templeton Prize, and the other, a distinguished physical scientist and "five-time nominee for the Nobel Prize" - will visit the Texas A&M University campus next week to present their views of faith, science and society as part of the university's 10th annual [Trotter Endowed Lecture Series](#) [1].

[Dr. Francisco J. Ayala](#) [2], University Professor and Donald Bren Professor of Biological Sciences, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of California, Irvine; and [Dr. Henry F. Schaefer III](#) [3], Graham Perdue Professor of Chemistry and Director of the Center for Computational Chemistry at the University of Georgia, will deliver a joint public lecture Tuesday (April 26) at 7 p.m. in Rudder Theater. The presentation, which is free and open to the public, will be followed by a reception in Rudder Exhibit Hall.

Ayala, a former Dominican priest who was awarded the National Medal of Science in 2001, has championed faith as an important window for understanding the purpose and meaning of life while warning against the intrusion of religion into science. His talk, "Darwin's Gift to Science and Religion," will explore Darwin's theory of evolution and discovery of natural selection as evidence for and explanation of both science and religion.

Schaefer, who has received four of the American Chemical Society's most prestigious awards as well as London's Royal Society of Chemistry's Centenary Medal -- its highest award given to a non-British subject -- is world-renowned for his general-interest lectures on science and religion delivered throughout the globe. His talk, "C.S. Lewis: Science and Scientism," will examine 20th century intellectual giant and influential Christian writer C.S. Lewis and his thoughts about science contained in his own words and works.

"We are very fortunate to have a world-class biologist and chemist come to Texas A&M to discuss ideas of such far-reaching interest," said Dr. H. Joseph Newton, dean of the College of Science.

The Trotter Prize and Endowed Lecture Series, presented by the College of Science in collaboration with the [Dwight Look College of Engineering](#) [4], seeks to illuminate connections between science and religion, often viewed in academia as non-overlapping if not rival world views. The series was established by Dr. Ide P. Trotter Jr. '54 and Luella H. Trotter with a matching contribution from ExxonMobil Corp. in 2001 to honor Ide P. Trotter Sr., former dean of Texas A&M University's Graduate School, and to recognize pioneering contributions to the understanding of the role of information, complexity and inference in illuminating the mechanisms and

wonder of nature.

Ayala, who received the 2001 National Medal of Science, is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1977) and American Philosophical Society. He received his doctorate from Columbia University in 1964. He is the only person at UC-Irvine to hold the title of University Professor, the highest rank in the California University System. His academic appointments at Irvine also include Professor of Philosophy in the School of Humanities and Professor of Logic and the Philosophy of Science in the School of Social Sciences.

Ayala's research focuses on the origin and evolution of introns as well as the evolution and functional significance of pseudogenes and ectopic expression. He has authored more than 1,000 papers and 40 books, including "Darwin's Gift to Science and Religion." In addition, he was the principal author of "Science, Evolution, and Creationism," an NAS publication refuting creationism and intelligent design. His most recent scientific achievements include demonstration that great apes serve as reservoirs for malaria-causing parasites.

A decorated researcher and scholar, Ayala's many awards include the Czech Academy of Sciences' Gold Honorary Gregor Mendel Medal, the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei's Gold Medal, the Stazione Zoologica-Naples's Gold Medal, the American Institute of Biological Sciences' President's Award, the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Scientific Freedom and Responsibility Award and 150th Anniversary Leadership Medal, the Medal of the College of France, the University of California's UCI Medal, the SACNAS 1998 Distinguished Scientist Award and Sigma Xi's 2000 William Procter Prize for Scientific Achievement. He holds 15 international honorary degrees.

Schaefer, described in a 1991 U.S. News and World Report cover story as a "five-time nominee for the Nobel Prize," is a Fellow of both the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2004) and the Royal Society of Chemistry (2005). He earned his doctorate in chemical physics from Stanford University in 1969 and served 18 years (1969-87) as a professor of chemistry at the University of California, Berkeley, before joining the faculty at Georgia in 1987. He was appointed an emeritus professor of chemistry at Berkeley in 2004.

Schaefer's research involves the use of state-of-the-art computational hardware and theoretical methods to solve important problems in molecular quantum mechanics. During the comprehensive period 1981 to 1997, he was the sixth-most-highly cited chemist in the world out of a total of 628,000 chemists whose research was cited. The Science Citation Index reports that by December 31, 2004 his research had been cited more than 35,000 times. He has authored more than 1,100 scientific publications, the majority of which have appeared in the Journal of Chemical Physics or the Journal of the American Chemical Society. In April 2004, the Journal of Physical Chemistry published a special issue in his honor.

Schaefer's major awards in addition to the Centenary Medal include the ACS's Award in Pure Chemistry (1979), Leo Hendrik Baekeland Award (1983), Award in Theoretical Chemistry (2003) and Ira Remsen Award (2003); the Schrodinger Medal

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(1990); and the University of Wisconsin's Joseph O. Hirschfelder Prize (2005-06). He has been invited to present plenary lectures at more than 200 national or international scientific conferences and delivered endowed or named lectures or lecture series at more than 40 major universities, including the 1998 Kenneth S. Pitzer Memorial Lecture at Berkeley and the 2001 Israel Pollak Distinguished Lectures at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa. He is the recipient of 14 international honorary degrees.

To learn more about the history of the Trotter Lecture Series and past presenters, visit <http://www.science.tamu.edu/trotter/> [1].

[SOURCE](#) [5]

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