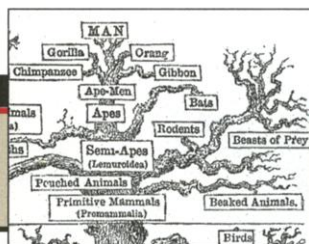
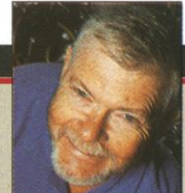


Microbes
and chronic
disease

Modernizing
the tree of
life

The working
physicist's
science-
fiction writer

Theoretically, WARF, which owns the WiCell patents, could try to prevent people from buying similar cells from, say, Sweden or India, because the Wisconsin patents cover both the substance of the cells and the method for deriving them. But WiCell says it will not object to the use of other embryonic stem cell lines as long as the other providers' conditions are generous, too.

Thompson has promised that by next week, NIH will post on the Web a detailed registry describing the 64 stem cell lines that qualify for federally supported research.

—CONSTANCE HOLDEN

NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE

Klausner Quits NCI to Head New Institute

Richard Klausner, director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), announced this week that he has resigned, effective at the end of the month. He will become the first director of a new philanthropic outfit in Washington, D.C., the Case Institute of Health Science and Technology, established with \$100 million in support from America Online founder Steve Case and his wife, Jean Case. "One of the great things" about the new job, Klausner said, is that he will remain close to NCI and continue to run an intramural lab there. The Case Institute, according to Klausner, will invest in a spectrum of health projects ranging from developing tools for molecular biology to bioinformatics and even methods of improving water quality in the developing world.

Klausner's departure had been rumored for months, although he denied as recently as 3 weeks ago that he was leaving (*Science*, 31 August, p. 1569). In an interview the day before he announced his departure at a meeting of the National Cancer Advisory Board (NCAB), Klausner denied any connection between his move and a clamp-down on NCI management by the Department of Health and Human Services, including revocation of large salary increases he had approved for NCI's top administra-

tive officer and others. Reports suggesting he is leaving as a result, Klausner said, are "absolutely false" and "made up of whole cloth." Far from welcoming his departure, Klausner said, the administration recently urged him to stay and head the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Klausner, who has been at NIH for 22 years, took charge of NCI in 1995. He made policy changes designed to make the administration more flexible and promote a molecular understanding of cancer.

Biologist Phillip Sharp of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a member of NCAB, said Klausner made NCI into "an open and forward-looking organization." At the NCAB meeting, Sharp praised Klausner for his leadership and "putting cancer research at the cutting edge of science and technology." The administration has not yet named an acting NCI director.

—ELIOT MARSHALL

With reporting by Jocelyn Kaiser.

ASTRONOMY

Report Finds Fault With NSF Oversight

A mixture of relief, praise, and criticism greeted the publication last week of a much-anticipated report* on support for astronomy in the United States. As *Science* reported 2 weeks ago (31 August, p. 1566), a panel of the National Academy of Sciences argued strongly against merging the astronomy programs of NASA and the National Science Foundation (NSF)—a possibility the White House had asked the academy to consider. But the panel has stirred up debate with recommendations to improve coordination of federal astronomy programs, while highlighting flaws in NSF support for the ground-based portion of the discipline.

The relief came from the panel's rejection of the idea of wholesale restructuring, on the grounds that multiple funding sources strengthen the field. But the panel noted that the growing influence of NASA, the interdependence between space- and ground-based telescopes, and the increasing role of state and private funds and facilities require "systematic, comprehensive, and coordinated planning." According to the panel, chaired by former aerospace executive

Norm Augustine, the planning should be carried out by a board representing several federal agencies and led by someone of the White House's choosing. The report also urges NSF to set up its own astronomy advisory panel and to build closer ties to non-federal players.

No one disputes the need for greater coordination of the field. But another advisory body at NSF isn't practical, says Robert Eisenstein, chief of NSF's math and physical sciences directorate. And, he adds, "if we



Clearer vision. Report says that greater cooperation will help private facilities such as the UC Observatories/Lick Observatory.

do it for astronomy, there are 40 other directorates that will say, 'What about us?'" Joseph Miller, director of the University of California Observatories/Lick Observatory in Santa Cruz, likes the idea of more community input at NSF. But he's troubled by the prospect of an interagency body setting priorities for the bulk of the country's astronomy portfolio. "We fear this could turn into some top-down monolithic program" that leaves little room for independent voices, says Miller, whose facility is funded by the state and by private foundations.

Apart from better coordination, most of the recommendations focus on the need to improve NSF's management of U.S. astronomy. The agency has lagged in supporting new instruments and allocating research grants as ground-based optical and infrared astronomy facilities have proliferated, the report notes. The Augustine panel suggests that NSF come up with its own strategic plan, including timelines and objectives, an open bidding process for all new facilities, and a more comprehensive accounting system for each project. It also suggests that NSF could learn from media-savvy NASA about how to publicize its scientific discoveries.



New foundation. After 22 years at NIH, Klausner is moving on.

* nap.edu/catalog/10190.html?onpi_topnews090501