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Biologists, Educators Recognize Excellence in Evolution Education

Dr. Randy Moore receives 2008 Evolution Education Award

Washington, DC – The National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT) will recognize Dr. Randy Moore, a professor of biology at the University of Minnesota, with the 2008 Evolution Education Award during the NABT annual conference to be held 15-18 October 2008 in Memphis, Tennessee.

The Evolution Education Award is cosponsored by the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) and the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS). The award is presented in recognition of innovative classroom teaching and community education efforts to promote the accurate understanding of biological evolution. Dr. Moore will receive a plaque, a \$1,000 cash prize, and a set of resources to support the teaching of evolution provided by AIBS and BSCS.

“This is a great honor, especially considering the roles AIBS and BSCS have played in defending the teaching of evolution. Helping students understand and appreciate nature is a basic goal of every science teacher, and few ideas in science can do a better job of that than evolution,” said Dr. Moore upon learning that he had been selected to receive the 2008 Evolution Education Award.

For nearly 30 years, Dr. Moore has based his teaching of biology explicitly on evolution. His introductory biology courses, for example, do not treat evolution as a stand-alone or discrete topic. Rather, his instruction incorporates evolution as a unifying element of modern biology.

“The evidence supporting evolution is overwhelming and comes from diverse disciplines, such as molecular biology, paleontology, comparative anatomy, ethology, and biochemistry. There is no controversy among biologists about whether evolution occurs, nor are there science-based alternative theories,” states Dr. Moore. “Evolution is a unifying theme in biology; teaching it as such is the best way to show students what biology is about and how they can use evolution as a tool to understand our world. [Evolution] is as important an idea as there is in science – it is a great gift to give to students,” says Dr. Moore.

Dr. Moore has worked beyond the classroom to improve public understanding of science and to help K-12 teachers continue to develop skills that help them effectively teach science. He has taught several summer workshops for K-12 teachers, has spoken to local groups of teachers and school districts, and has organized a Learning Abroad course titled “Evolution and the Biology of the Galapagos.” Additionally, Dr. Moore was a founding member of the Minnesota Citizens for Science Education, a grassroots organization that defends the teaching of evolution in local schools.

Dr. Moore has worked to build dialogue between science and religious groups. “I grew up with, understand, and respect religious traditions. I strongly oppose the teaching of creationism in science

classes, not only because it is not science, but it is unlawful,” says Moore, “Distorting science to placate particular religious views is not only bad pedagogy; it also belittles faith.”

Dr. Mark Decker, a colleague at the University of Minnesota, is pleased that Moore is being recognized. Dr. Decker says of Moore’s accomplishments, “I have been with Randy on campus when we encounter a former student that stops and thanks Randy for his class, and whenever I have his former students in my classes, they are all effusive in their praise for him.” Decker further commends Moore for his scholarship, noting that he works to publish timely research on evolution education that is also relevant to instructors.

Dr. Moore earned his bachelor’s degree in biology from Texas A&M University, a master’s degree in botany from the University of Georgia, and his PhD in biology from the University of California at Los Angeles.

Previous honors and awards for Moore include the Case/Carnegie Teacher of the Year (University of Minnesota), Honorary Member of National Association of Biology Teachers, Most Outstanding Research-Teaching Award from the National Association of Biology Teachers, Outstanding Undergraduate Science Teacher from the National Association of Science Teachers, and Outstanding Professor recognitions from Baylor University and Wright State University.

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About AIBS:

The American Institute of Biological Sciences is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) scientific association dedicated to advancing biological research and education for the welfare of society. Founded in 1947 as a part of the National Academy of Sciences, AIBS became an independent, member-governed organization in the 1950s. Today, with headquarters in Washington, DC, and a staff of approximately 50, AIBS is sustained by a robust membership of some 5,000 biologists and 200 professional societies and scientific organizations; the combined individual membership of the latter exceeds 250,000. AIBS advances its mission through coalition activities in research, education, and public policy; publishing the peer-reviewed journal *BioScience* and the education website ActionBioscience.org; providing scientific peer review and advisory services to government agencies and other clients; convening meetings; and managing scientific programs. Website: www.aibs.org.

About BSCS:

Headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS) is a non-profit research and development organization that endeavors to improve all students' understanding of science and technology by developing exemplary curricular materials, supporting their widespread and effective use, providing professional development, and conducting research and evaluation studies. For more information, please visit www.bsccs.org.

About NABT:

Headquartered in Reston, Virginia, the National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT) is a non-profit professional association for biology educators. NABT empowers educators to provide the best possible biology and life science education for all students. To date, more than 9,000 educators have joined NABT to share experiences and expertise with colleagues from around the globe; keep up with trends and developments in the field; and grow professionally. For more information about NABT, including information about its publication, *American Biology Teacher*, conferences and workshops, or regional affiliates, please visit www.nabt.org.

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