2007 Double Helix Medals Award Dinner

raises millions for CSHL research
New Yorkers are often stereotyped as hard-driving, uncaring and aloof, but the Double Helix Medals Dinner completely shatters that myth.

On November 8, 2007, some of the most generous people in New York City came to the Mandarin Oriental Hotel along Columbus Circle. They gathered at this picturesque venue overlooking Central Park for the second Double Helix Medals Dinner to support Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (CSHL) and to honor David H. Koch, Dr. Richard Axel and Dr. Michael Wigler.

The Double Helix Medal refers to the unique structure of the DNA molecule, which carries all of life’s information. The term “Double Helix” was selected because the structure is central to all biological research and is at the heart of the work performed at CSHL. Today, under the leadership of President Bruce Stillman, Ph.D., more than 400 scientists conduct groundbreaking research to help us understand and treat cancer, autism, schizophrenia, Parkinson’s disease and other causes of human suffering.

“As an institution, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory has long been recognized for its excellence in biological and biomedical science research,” Stillman said during the awards ceremony. “It is therefore fitting that we recognize individuals who have dedicated their lives to conducting or supporting genetics research that will improve the health of people everywhere.”

Hundred of friends and supporters celebrated at the black-tie gala as the event’s master of ceremony, Phil Donahue, seamlessly navigated through the evening with sophistication and a healthy dose of self-deprecating humor.

Honorary CSHL trustee Evelyn Lauder of The Estée Lauder Companies Inc., graciously presented Double Helix Medals to Nobel laureate Dr. Richard Axel and Dr. Michael Wigler, CSHL professor. The two friends and research colleagues collaborated to discover cotransformation, a novel gene transfer technique that permits the introduction of virtually any gene into any cell, leading to numerous novel therapies that benefit mankind.

Hillie Mahoney, one of CSHL’s most benevolent supporters, presented the Double Helix Medal to David H. Koch, co-owner and executive vice president of Koch Industries, the largest privately held company in America. A CSHL trustee from 1992 to 1998, Koch has personally pledged and contributed more than $400 million to organizations and programs that further cancer research, enhance medical centers, support educational institutions, and sustain art and cultural institutions.

Koch’s speech touched everyone at the dinner. His passion for finding a prostate cancer cure was felt throughout the room. As he described how he and his three brothers had been diagnosed with prostate cancer, his eyes welled up with emotion, and he stressed his determination to protect his two young sons from contracting this disease. “It is their well-being that is a powerful incentive to continue to support prostate cancer research,” Koch said.

Thanks to David Koch and all of the supporters of the Double Helix Medals Dinner that evening, CSHL raised $3.1 million to continue our mission to prevail over cancers, neurological diseases and other forms of human suffering.

Please visit our special Web site dedicated to the Double Helix Medals, where you can see pictures and videos of the event, the honorees and our generous supporters: http://doublehelixmedals.cshl.edu

Jim Bono
2007 Double Helix Medals Award Dinner

Violinist Jourdan Urbach

Drs. Paul and Joan Marks; Dr. and Mrs. Michael Wigler

Dr. Bruce Stillman and Julia Koch; Lisa Kennedy DiCicco, Michael Kennedy, Elenora Kennedy