

# Evolution on the Front Line: 2005 Chronology

FOR EVOLUTION RESOURCES, SEE [WWW.AAAS.ORG/NEWS/PRESS\\_ROOM/EVOLUTION](http://WWW.AAAS.ORG/NEWS/PRESS_ROOM/EVOLUTION)

## 2 February

“Science is not by definition opposed to religion,” AAAS CEO Alan I. Leshner wrote in an op-ed published by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. “But if [students] are confused about the nature of science, or if the science taught in their classrooms is distorted by an overlay of nonscientific values, then they may never reach their full potential.”

## 28 March

AAAS sent letters of support to members of the Association of Science-Technology Centers, expressing “strong concerns about increasing threats to science.” The letter was triggered by a *New York Times* article suggesting that a number of large-screen theaters had declined to show films referencing evolution.

## 8 April

*O Globo*, the leading Brazilian newspaper, published an op-ed from AAAS in support of evolution, to coincide with the CEO’s lecture at a scientific conference there.

## 10 April

After consultation with the Kansas scientific community, AAAS declined to appear at a public hearing on teaching evolution in Kansas public schools. Debating a well-supported scientific theory would only promote further confusion about the nature of facts versus faith, AAAS concluded.

## 27 April

Dr. Eugenie Scott, executive director of the National Center for Science Education, told the 30th annual AAAS Forum on Science and Technology Policy that evolution is a strong, balanced explanation of how species change over time and has no inherent conflict with religion.

## 8 May

“The time has come to move beyond polarizing debate,” the AAAS CEO wrote in the *Kansas City Star*. “The Kansas Board of Education science subcommittee should remember that fact and faith are different, but both have the power to improve people’s lives, and they can coexist — just not in science classrooms.”

## 10 June

AAAS joined 55 other scientific organizations in urging an appeals court to uphold a ruling that barred the Cobb County, Georgia, school board from putting anti-evolution disclaimer stickers on biology textbooks. The stickers had earlier been ruled unconstitutional.

## 29 June

EurekaAlert!, the science-news Web site launched by AAAS, hosted an online discussion that included Prof. Kenneth Miller of Brown University and other leading evolution experts.

## 22 July

Eighty years after John Thomas Scopes was convicted of teaching evolution, historian of science Marcel LaFollette visited AAAS to share an engaging account of the famous “Monkey Trial.” Her talk was illustrated by unpublished photographs that she had discovered in Smithsonian archives.

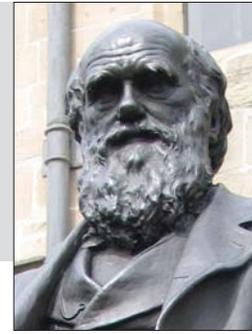
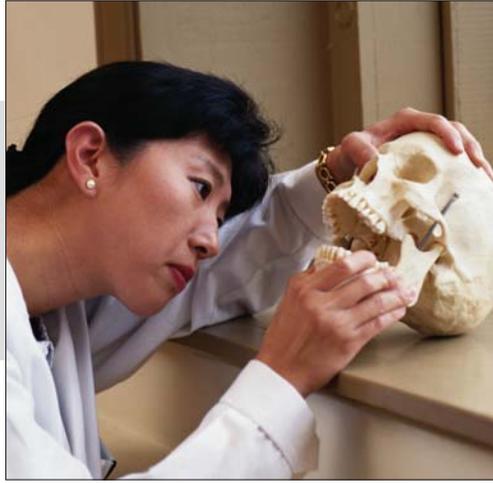
## 4 August

AAAS emphasized the importance of teaching evolution on the well-regarded public radio feature, “The Diane Rehm Show.” Also in August, leading news organizations, including ABC, CNN, MSNBC, NPR, and *Time* turned to AAAS for expert opinion on U.S. Administration comments regarding intelligent design.

## 13 September

AAAS Fellow John Staver of Kansas State University appeared at the Kansas State Board of Education to express “very strong concern about recent changes in the proposed Kansas Science Education Standards.”





### 22 September

Days before the launch of a federal court challenge to the teaching of evolution in Dover, Pennsylvania, AAAS and the National Center for Science Education held a teleconference for reporters. “Leaders of the ID movement have neither science nor mainstream religion on their side,” the AAAS CEO said in an op-ed published around the same time in a handful of Dover-area newspapers. “The ID movement is not science, and it has no place in science classrooms.”

### 27 September

NBC Nightly News coverage of intelligent design and evolution featured commentary by the AAAS CEO.

### 25 October

AAAS endorsed draft national student-learning standards, but urged the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) to add explicit language on the nature of science. “If U.S. students aren’t expected to know what is and is not science, they will have no basis for recognizing that, for example, intelligent design is not science,” the AAAS CEO testified.

### 27 October

With misinformation about evolution and the nature of science at stake in proposed Kansas science education standards, AAAS announced that it would strongly support two national science organizations that declined to allow Kansas to use their copyrighted material.

### 8 November

AAAS publicly denounced revisions to Kansas science education standards that undermine the teaching of evolution. “This is a vote to mix science and faith in public school science classrooms, at great risk to the economy,” the AAAS CEO said.

### 20 December

AAAS applauded the federal court ruling in Dover, Pennsylvania, where Judge John E. Jones III forcefully struck down efforts to make teachers read a disclaimer before teaching evolution to high-school students. “We are grateful for the courage of science teachers and parents in Dover, who worked so hard and took such risks to preserve the integrity of science education,” AAAS wrote.

### 22 December

Independently, the journal *Science* released its Breakthrough of the Year edition, featuring “Evolution in Action.”

“Whether or not there is or was an intelligent designer is not a scientific question. It’s not an alternative to evolution. What they are trying to do is get religion in the science classroom.”

—Alan I. Leshner, AAAS CEO and executive publisher, *Science*, quoted by William Safire in the *New York Times*, 21 August 2005

“Although biology is the field most directly at risk from the creationists, the integrity of science as a whole is at stake, argues Alan Leshner, chief executive of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. ‘The problem is that ID advocates attempt to dress up religious beliefs to make them look like science. By redefining what is and isn’t science they also put the public (particularly young people) at risk of being inadequately prepared to live in modern society,’ he says.”

—Financial Times article by Clive Cookson, 23 December 2005