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## Book review

**Fedoroff, N.; Botstein, D.: The Dynamic Genome: Barbara McClintock's Ideas in the Century of Genetics.** Cold Spring Harbor, New York: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press. 1992. 422 pp., 36 figs., 32 photo., 8 tab. Hard bound \$ 65.00.

This book is primarily a compilation of essays written by friends and colleagues of Barbara McClintock in honor of her 90th birthday. The perspectives of these contributions are particularly enlightening as they vary from former graduate students to laboratory coworkers to colleagues involved in related research endeavors. The structure of the book is more-or-less arranged according to a time-frame based on the career of Barbara McClintock. Dispersed among these contributions are reprints of a few manuscripts authored or coauthored by McClintock, including classical articles such as the relationship between cytological and genetic crossing-over and, of course, transposable elements. The book also contains a reprint of the Nobel lecture given in 1983 when she was honored with this distinguished award.

The essays written by former students give insight not only into the personal dedication and scientific approach of McClintock, but also the working relationship between major professor and student. Most of the other contributions excel in one of two ways. Some firmly establish McClintock's position in relation to other "giants" of genetics as this scientific field progressed during the century. Other authors specifically address the widespread impact her work had on the science of genetics, particularly in cytogenetics. For instance, several individuals relate the impact the insights elucidated by McClintock have had on their research careers with organisms other than maize. In many cases, importance is placed on the role played by personal rela-

tionships and discussions with McClintock on the careers of the authors. It is essential to note that a primary catalyst for these types of interaction was McClintock's interest in furthering the understanding of genetics. The reader does not perceive there to have been an attitude of superiority taken by this prominent scientist but one very willing to assist the development of other scientists as they pursued the answers to fundamental questions. McClintock's overall role in the science of genetics cannot be overstated as one examines the diversity of research thrusts she influenced throughout her career. This reviewer was also highly entertained by the contribution of G. Albrecht-Buehler titled "The Revenge of the Mayans", a humorously written critique of the scientific life of Barbara McClintock.

A reading of this book by current students would benefit their appreciation of the historical progress made in genetics during this century. It also serves as a pertinent example of the widespread impact an individual can have in the scientific community, and that significant breakthroughs are not limited in their scope of application to the immediate field of interest or specific organism of use. The scientific community suffered a tremendous loss with the recent death of this eminent scientist. The effect of Barbara McClintock's career will undoubtedly continue as she gave us insights into fundamental questions that we are now only beginning to address. The fact that many of her major discoveries were made with what would now be considered very crude technology only serves to establish the genius that was Barbara McClintock. In conclusion, I highly recommend this book to all scientists interested or involved in genetic research.

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