

## PRESS RELEASE

# Fighting to keep Darwin in the classroom

## New journal *Outreach and Education in Evolution* will arm educators for battle with creationists

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Nearly a century ago, John Scopes was found guilty of violating a Tennessee statute when he taught evolution in his classroom. Though an appeals court later reversed his conviction on a technicality, the law lingered on the books, joined by later laws promoting “scientific creationism,” and, most recently, “intelligent design.” The battle to keep religiously based explanations of the history of life—especially human life—out of the science curriculum continues unabated. And though a number of educational institutions and organizations have had notable success in combating intelligent design in the classroom, what is needed now is a fresh source of evolution materials and anti-creationism ammunition for our school teachers on the front lines of this ongoing battle. Today, on Darwin’s 198<sup>th</sup> birthday, Springer announces plans for a new journal which will do just that.

A father-and-son team—a world-renowned evolutionary biologist and a highly skilled and sophisticated science high school teacher—have decided it’s time to help science educators fight back against the strong pressure creationists are exerting on public education. In the new journal *Outreach and Education in Evolution*, to be published by Springer starting in March 2008, editors-in-chief Niles and Greg Eldredge intend to fill the gap between scientific literature and curriculum materials normally available to educators and students.

Niles Eldredge has been a paleontologist on the curatorial staff of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) since 1969. His theory of “punctuated equilibria” (co-authored with Stephen Jay Gould) is a milestone in contemporary evolutionary biology. He has combated the creationist movement through lectures, articles and books and is the curator responsible for the content of the major exhibition *Darwin* which opened at the AMNH in New York in November 2005, drawing in over 500,000 visitors. Greg Eldredge has a Masters Degree in Education and has been a New York City school teacher for the past three years. He is a co-author of the children’s book *The Fossil Factory*. The two are supported by an international editorial board, made up of some of the most renowned scientists in the field.

Niles and Greg Eldredge are in agreement: “Evolution remains the central unifying idea in biology and yet is still a source of contention and confusion in the classroom. In *Outreach and Education in Evolution*, we’ll cover the gamut, from molecules to ecosystems and from ‘intelligent design’ to natural selection. We aim to make a big difference in evolutionary education.”

Amelia McNamara, Vice President, Publishing, Life Sciences and Biomedicine at Springer, said, “Springer stands behind evolutionary theory as a fundamental component of modern science education, especially now since the ‘intelligent design’ advocates have made worrying attempts to promote their views in public schools. We are committed to helping educators

teach Darwin's theory to students at all levels. *Outreach and Education in Evolution* will provide them with the tools they need."

*Outreach and Education in Evolution*, a traditional peer-reviewed journal with non-traditional features, will address these concerns. Each quarterly issue will feature peer-reviewed articles on evolution, "letters from the trenches," interviews with prominent scientists and educators, lesson plans, critical essays, cartoons, puzzles, reviews on evolution in the media (books, movies, museum openings and exhibitions) and more. The full-color online edition will offer added value, for example chat rooms, teaching resources and blogging opportunities. In addition, Springer has committed up to \$10,000 annually in grants and prizes for the best paper, the best lesson plan, etc. The journal, aimed at members of the educational, museum, and scientific community involved in the teaching of evolutionary theory, will be available at a very affordable price.

Kathleen K. Smith, Director, National Evolutionary Synthesis Center, said, "As an official partner of *Outreach and Education in Evolution*, NESCENT is pleased to support this important endeavor. Focusing on the issues and challenges surrounding evolution education, it will provide a much needed resource for teachers presenting this important but often poorly understood subject. I believe that it will fill a valuable niche."

Douglas J. Futuyma, Distinguished Professor at Stony Brook University and President of the American Institute of Biological Sciences, added, "Increasing public understanding of science is of utmost importance. This is most urgently required with respect to evolution, which commands acceptance by less than half the American public. Springer's new journal is very timely and indeed well overdue. It is sure to play a major role in science education in the United States and beyond."

Telmo Pievani, Professor of Philosophy of Science at the University of Milan, Italy, said, "*Outreach and Education in Evolution* is absolutely opportune in its mission. It is much needed today for European audiences as well, where some conservative and religious leaders have grasped the political power of the tricky ideas of 'intelligent design.' For such a project, education is the main pathway."

Springer ([www.springer.com](http://www.springer.com)) is the second-largest publisher worldwide in the science, technology, and medicine (STM) sector. Springer is part of Springer Science+Business Media, one of the world's leading suppliers of scientific and specialist literature. The group publishes over 1,700 journals and more than 5,500 new books a year, as well as the largest STM eBook Collection worldwide. Springer has operations in over 20 countries in Europe, the USA, and Asia, and some 5,000 employees.

The editors-in-chief, Niles and Greg Eldredge, are available for interviews.

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