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Jefferson's Wolf: A Founding Father's Troubling Answer to the Problem of Slavery

ABSTRACT: Christa Dierksheide and Nicholas Guyatt, authors of the recently published *Jefferson's Wolf: A Founding Father's Troubling Answer to the Problem of Slavery* (Harvard University Press), will be in conversation with Brent Staples, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and member of the *New York Times* editorial board for nearly four decades. They will discuss Thomas Jefferson's evolution as an antislavery thinker, the motives behind his opposition to slavery, and his failures to craft a meaningful project for emancipation either at federal or state level, or in his own household. They will focus in particular on Jefferson's energetic advocacy of 'antislavery exclusion', the belief that slavery could be ended only through a commitment to removing Black people from the United States. While Jefferson maintained this view from the American Revolution until his death in 1826, the political, economic and demographic terrain of slavery shifted considerably across this period, forcing Jefferson into increasingly strained permutations of 'antislavery exclusion' and, eventually, into insisting that the problem belonged to the next generation: "This enterprise is for the young," he declared in 1814. Finally, the panellists will engage the many afterlives of 'antislavery exclusion', including the evolution of Jefferson's reputation as a principled opponent of slavery, the erasure in popular memory of his steadfast commitment to Black exclusion, and the efforts by myriad other Americans to make "all men are created equal" mean much more than Thomas Jefferson had intended.

Christa Dierksheide
Christa Dierksheide is the Brockman Foundation Jefferson Scholars Foundation Professor of History at the University of Virginia, where she directs the Center for the Study of the Age of Jefferson. She is the author of *Amelioration and Empire: Progress and Slavery in the Plantation Americas* (UVA Press, 2014) and *Beyond Jefferson: The Hemingses, the Randolphs, and the Making of Nineteenth-Century America* (Yale, 2024). Her most recent book, co-authored with Nicholas Guyatt, is *Jefferson's Wolf: A Founding Father's Troubling Answer to the Problem of Slavery* (Harvard, 2026). Before returning to academia, she was a historian at Monticello, where she curated and contributed to numerous exhibitions including *Sally Hemings: A Life* (2018).

Nicholas Guyatt
Nicholas Guyatt is Professor of North American History at the University of Cambridge. He is the author of many books, including *Bind Us Apart: How Enlightened Americans*

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Invented Racial Segregation and (with Christa Dierksheide) *Jefferson's Wolf: A Founding Father's Troubling Answer to the Problem of Slavery*. He is also the editor of the *Oxford Illustrated History of the United States*, which was published in June. He has written about American history and politics for many publications, including the *London Review of Books*, the *New York Review of Books*, and the *New York Times*.

Brent Staples
Brent Staples cultivated a national audience for his essays on race, class, culture and politics while serving as a member of *The New York Times* Editorial Board from 1990 to 2025. In 2019, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for writing on the legacies of slavery with "extraordinary moral clarity." Staples holds a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Chicago and is author of the memoir "Parallel Time," finalist for The Los Angeles Times Book Award and winner of the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award. Harvard University selected him to deliver the W.E.B. DuBois Lectures, a three-day address honoring those who have made distinctive contributions to African American history and culture. His current research focuses on African Americans in nineteenth century New York City

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The Foundational Role of Botanical Collections to Biodiversity Knowledge on our Rapidly Changing Planet: Insights from the Harvard University Herbaria

Jeannine Cavender-Bares
Jeannine Cavender-Bares is a plant evolutionary ecologist, Professor of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, and Director of the Harvard University Herbaria. She champions natural history collections as foundations for understanding biodiversity, and her work bridges centuries of botanical history with modern technology. Her research utilizes herbarium specimens, manipulative experiments, and field observations to gain insights into plant evolution, ecological adaptation over time, and the functioning of ecosystems that serve as our life support systems. As the director of the NSF-funded ASCEND Biology Integration Institute and the International Herbarium Spectral digitization working group (IHerbSpec), her team integrates biodiversity collections with spectral biology to study what reflected photons from plants can tell us about the variation in plant life on Earth. This innovative and collaborative approach transforms static historical specimens into dynamic tools for mapping biodiversity change.Through her

leadership and research, Cavender-Bares demonstrates that herbaria are not just archives of the past, but critical infrastructure for protecting the future of our biosphere.

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To Pin a Butterfly: Fugitive Religion and the 1890 Ghost Dance

Tiffany Hale
Tiffany Hale is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion at Barnard College of Columbia University. She is the author of Fugitive Religion: The Ghost Dance and Indigenous Resistance After the U.S. Civil War (Yale University Press, 2026).

ABSTRACT: This talk offers insights from historian Tiffany M. Hale's recent book *Fugitive Religion: The Ghost Dance and Indigenous Resistance After the U.S. Civil War* (Yale University Press, 2026). By reexamining the familiar story of the Ghost Dance and Wounded Knee Massacre and placing it into the context of resistance by Black and Native peoples during Reconstruction and Redemption, Hale explains the Ghost Dance not just as a religious movement but also as a complex social phenomenon that enabled Indigenous people to maintain their identities and communities despite the pervasive force of colonialism and the challenges of modernity. Chronicling how individual Native people, their families, and communities navigated the fraught post–Civil War conditions of the United States, Hale suggests that Ghost Dances hold something in common with blues traditions of working-class African Americans. By giving Ghost Dance participants a chance to reflect on their lived experiences of warfare, deracination, and diplomacy, "fugitive religion" helped to create modern racial self-consciousness in the United States. This talk explores these themes and asks what methods enable scholars to better represent evidence of religious movements in the creation of historical narratives.

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Karl Spencer Lashley Award
and
The Lascaux Rectangle and the Cognitive Origins of Geometry

Stanislas Dehaene
Professor Stanislas Dehaene PhD, is a French mathematician, psychologist and cognitive neuroscientist. He holds the Chair of Experimental Cognitive Psychology at

the Collége de France in Paris, and is the scientific director of the NeuroSpin center in Saclay, south of Paris, France's advanced brain imaging research center. In 2018, he became the president of the newly created French Scientific Council for Education, which advises the French government on scientific approaches to learning and teaching. Stanislas Dehaene is recognized for his pioneering studies of “the number sense”, the brain circuits that we share with other primates and that allow us to understand numbers and mathematics. He is also a specialist of reading and uncovered the function of the "visual word form area", a left-hemisphere region that specializes for letters when we learn to read. He is also one of the authors of the global neuronal workspace theory of consciousness, and has also discovered several "signatures of consciousness", patterns of brain responses that are unique to conscious processing and can be used to diagnose coma and vegetative-state patients.

ABSTRACT: Some 21,000 years ago, artists entered an underground cavity of southern France that we now call the Lascaux Cave, and adorned its walls with images of bulls, horses and deer. Less known, however, is that humans also drew geometric shapes: a humble rectangle beneath a Lascaux deer, a simple zigzag engraved on a shell, or the elegant symmetries of ancient stone tools. I will argue that these shapes betray an evolutionary leap: the emergence of an inner language of thought that lets us combine ideas at will. Experiments show that the shorter a shape’s description in this mental language, the more easily we perceive and remember it, and brain imaging reveals where and when these mental expressions are built. The singularity of the human mind among primates may lie in its ability to master symbolic languages in every domain, from verbal communication to music and math.

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The American Experiment at 250: A Conversation

Mike Pence

Mike Pence was born in Columbus, Indiana into a family that epitomized the American Dream, instilling in him values of hard work, faith, and family. After graduating from Hanover College and Indiana University School of Law, he embarked on a multifaceted career, including law practice, hosting a talk show, serving as a Congressman for six terms, and championing limited government and fiscal responsibility. Pence then was elected the 50th Governor of Indiana, focusing on tax cuts, job creation, education reform, and infrastructure investment while maintaining fiscal responsibility. His

accomplishments in Indiana led to his selection as the 48th Vice President of the United States. Pence's conservative philosophy, inspired by Ronald Reagan, led to his founding of Advancing American Freedom which continues to advocate for faith, family, and liberty as foundational American values.

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Law, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty

ABSTRACT: What does tribal sovereignty mean in practice? Across the United States, Native Nations are exercising their inherent authority in ways that challenge conventional understandings of law, economic power, and political self-determination. Far from being merely subjects of federal Indian law, tribal nations are dynamic governments, lawmakers, and economic innovators, drawing upon centuries-old legal traditions while shaping their own futures. This panel explores three interconnected dimensions of contemporary Indigenous sovereignty: the emergence of Native Nations as powerful and innovative economic actors; the continuing vitality of Indigenous legal traditions as sources of law, governance, and justice; and the assertion of tribal authority over Native identities, names, and cultural heritage in an increasingly commercialized world. Together, these perspectives reveal how Native Nations are actively defining the terms of their relationships with the United States, the marketplace, and the broader legal system. Ultimately, the panel invites a reconsideration of fundamental questions about sovereignty, property, and power: Who makes the law? Who controls cultural identity? And what can Native Nations teach us about the possibilities of self-government in the twenty-first century?

Angela Riley
Angela R. Riley (Citizen Potawatomi Nation) is the Goldberg Endowed Chair of Native American Law at UCLA where she directs the Native Nations Law and Policy Center and serves as Special Advisor to the Chancellor. Her scholarship has been widely published in the nation's leading legal journals. She received her undergraduate degree at the University of Oklahoma and her law degree from Harvard. Professor Riley was raised on a working farm at Saddle Mountain, Oklahoma located within the borders of the Kiowa, Comanche, Apache Indian Reservation. In 2003 she became the first woman and youngest Justice of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Supreme Court and has served as Chief Justice since 2010. She is also an appellate justice for numerous other tribal courts and has chaired and served on several UN boards. Professor Riley is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Law Institute.

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Matthew Fletcher
Matthew L.M. Fletcher is the Harry Burns Hutchins Collegiate Professor of Law and Professor of American Culture at the University of Michigan. He sits as the Chief Justice of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, and serves as a judge for nearly ten other tribal nations. He is a member of the Grand Traverse Band. Professor Fletcher graduated from the University of Michigan Law School in 1997 and the University of Michigan Law School in 1994. He is married to Wenona Singel, a member of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, and they have two children, Owen and Emmett.

Lance Morgan
Lance Morgan is President and Chief Executive Officer of Ho-Chunk, Inc. Morgan launched Ho-Chunk, Inc. in 1994 as the economic development corporation of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska. Under Morgan's leadership, Ho-Chunk, Inc. has been recognized by a variety of national organizations including: Innovations in Government Award, sponsored by Harvard University and the Ford Foundation; Honoring Nations Award, also sponsored by Harvard; Minority Business Magazine, Entrepreneurial Spirit Award; Distinguished Alumni Speaker, Harvard Law School; Small Business Administration; U.S. Department of State; U.S. Department of Commerce; and the White House. Morgan earned a Bachelor's Degree in Economics from the University of Nebraska (B. S. 1990) and graduated from Harvard Law School (J.D. 1993). He is a member of the Minnesota Bar Association. Morgan is an enrolled member of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska.

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The War for America: How the Revolution Was Fought

Rick Atkinson
Rick Atkinson is the author of eight narrative histories about five American wars. His most recent book, *The Fate of the Day: The War for America, Fort Ticonderoga to Charleston, 1777-1780*, debuted as the #1 New York Times nonfiction bestseller. The New York Times Book Review declared, "This is great history...There is no better writer of narrative history than the Pulitzer Prize-winning Atkinson." Ken Burns wrote, "Rick Atkinson takes his place among the greatest of all historians. This superb second volume in his Revolution Trilogy is that rare narrative that keeps you on the edge of your seat."

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Born in Munich, Germany, Atkinson is the son of a U.S. Army officer and holds a master of arts degree in English literature from the University of Chicago. A former reporter, foreign correspondent, and senior editor at the Washington Post, his many awards include Pulitzer Prizes in history and journalism.

ABSTRACT: Many Americans tend to view our Revolution as a faded lithograph, seen in bloodless, sepia tints. In truth, it was relentlessly violent. At least 25,000 Americans died in the eight-year struggle, a larger proportion of our population to perish in any conflict other than the Civil War. Add to that some 30,000 British and Hessian casualties. Many atrocities were committed by both sides. Much of the battlefield killing was intimate, at very close range, often with a bayonet, since 18th century muskets were largely inaccurate beyond eighty yards. American marksmen learned to target the brightest red coats in enemy ranks because they were usually worn by officers who could afford the more expensive dyes that made those uniforms vibrant. The enduring image of a yeoman farmer leaving his plow in the furrow to grab a musket on behalf of freedom is mostly mythical; the American army increasingly depended on the landless young, the poor, the desperate, and sometimes the shiftless. Even so, an obscure, brushfire insurrection on the Atlantic seaboard became a global war, waged on four continents and the seven seas.

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Socio-Economic Systems: From the Individual to the Collective

Jean-Philippe Bouchaud
Co-founder, chairman and chief scientist of Capital Fund Management (CFM), Jean-Philippe Bouchaud is a co-director of the CFM chair of Econophysics & Complex Systems. A member of the French Academy of Sciences, he held the Bettencourt Innovation Chair at Collège de France in 2020. A physicist by training (ENS Paris PhD), Bouchaud worked at CEA-Saclay on glassy systems before founding Science & Finance in 1994. He has received numerous honors including the Onsager Prize (2024) and CNRS Silver Medal (1996). He has authored 400 papers in physics and finance and several Cambridge University Press books on financial markets and random matrix theory.

ABSTRACT: Why do markets crash without news, opinions flip overnight, and long-dominant institutions suddenly vanish? Explanations based on isolated, rational individuals struggle with such questions. As Phil Anderson put it in his 1972 paper,

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"More is Different": interacting agents can produce collective behaviour that no individual would ever display. Statistical physics offers concepts and tools to bridge micro-motives and macro-behaviour. I will show how deliberately simple "metaphorical" models reveal generic mechanisms: imitation, feedback loops and phase transitions, where smooth changes at the individual level trigger abrupt shifts at the collective level. Crises, panics and fashions, but also money, social norms and stable societies, then appear as expressions of collective belief and trust, sustained by interactions yet prone to sudden collapse. Remarkably, only a few individual features matter for such emergent behaviour, which is good news for modelling. I will conclude with how optimization can make these systems fragile and prone to crises.

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Benjamin Franklin Medal
and
Fireside Chat: Carla Hayden with Sarah Thomas

Carla Hayden
Carla Hayden was sworn in as the 14th Librarian of Congress in September 2016. She is the first woman and first African American to lead the national library, possessing five decades of transformative leadership in library science and public service. During her tenure at the Library of Congress, she modernized and democratized access to the world's largest library by overseeing digitization initiatives, expanding public engagement with its vast collections, and making the institution more relevant and accessible to all Americans. Prior to her service as the Librarian of Congress, Dr. Hayden served for 23 years as CEO of the Enoch Pratt Free Library system in Baltimore, Maryland, launching innovative programs including after-school centers for Baltimore teens, comprehensive digital access initiatives, and community-centered services that spanned social and economic divides.

Sarah Thomas
Sarah Thomas has shaped the landscape of global research libraries over five decades, culminating in the direction of three of the world's premier academic library systems: Cornell University Library, Oxford's Bodleian Libraries, and Harvard Library, where she concluded her career as Vice President and University Librarian. An early adopter of digital transformation, Thomas guided management of change in libraries in the shift

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from card catalogs to advanced online networks and collaborative enterprises. At Cornell, she brought the pathbreaking arXiv physics pre-print server under library auspices. At Oxford, her strategic leadership ensured the transformation of the Bodleian estate to better support preservation, storage, public engagement, and teaching. Recipient of the ALA Medal of Excellence in 2007, Thomas holds a Ph.D. in German literature from Johns Hopkins University and was elected in 2014 as a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Philosophical Society.

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Jacques Barzun Prize in Cultural History

Francesca Rochberg

Francesca Rochberg (1952) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She received her B.A. in Oriental Studies from the University of Pennsylvania and her Ph.D. from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago. She is Catherine and William L. Magistretti Distinguished Professor of Near Eastern Studies Emerita in the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures of the University of California, Berkeley. She is a MacArthur Fellow (1982), a Guggenheim Fellow (1993), and was a Member at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, School of Historical Studies (2007). Her recent books include *Before Nature: Cuneiform Knowledge and the History of Science* (University of Chicago Press, 2016), *Worldmaking and Cuneiform Antiquity: An Anthropology of Science* (Cambridge University Press, 2024) and (edited) *Studies in Premodern Sciences in Memory of Noel M. Swerdlow: Antiquity to the Renaissance. Archimedes vol. 74.* (Springer Nature, 2026).

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Benjamin Franklin Medal
and
Fireside Chat: Justice Sonia Sotomayor with David S. Tatel

Sonia Sotomayor

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Sonia Sotomayor, Associate Justice, was born in Bronx, New York, on June 25, 1954. She earned a B.A. in 1976 from Princeton University, graduating summa cum laude and a member of Phi Beta Kappa and receiving the Pyne Prize, the highest academic honor Princeton awards to an undergraduate. In 1979, she earned a J.D. from Yale Law School where she served as an editor of the Yale Law Journal. She served as Assistant District Attorney in the New York County District Attorney's Office from 1979–1984. She then litigated international commercial matters in New York City at Pavia & Harcourt, where she served as an associate and then partner from 1984–1992. In 1991, President George H.W. Bush nominated her to the U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York, and she served in that role from 1992–1998. In 1997, she was nominated by President Bill Clinton to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit where she served from 1998–2009. President Barack Obama nominated her as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court on May 26, 2009, and she assumed this role August 8, 2009.

David S. Tatel

Judge David Tatel served on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit from 1994 to 2024, succeeding future Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. After graduating from the University of Michigan and the University of Chicago Law School, he served as the founding director of the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and then director of the National Lawyers Committee. He headed the Office for Civil Rights of the US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare during the Carter administration and then founded and led the education practice at Hogan Lovells, where he is now Senior Counsel. Judge Tatel co-chaired the committee on Science, Technology and Law from 2016 to 2023. He also chaired the boards of The Spencer Foundation and The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Judge Tatel is a member of the American Philosophical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Judge Tatel is the author of *Vision: A Memoir of Blindness and Justice*, (Little Brown, 2024).

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Patrick Suppes Prize
and
How the Human Brain Hears Speech

Edward Chang

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Edward F. Chang, MD, is a pioneer in mapping how the human brain produces speech, work that led his laboratory to develop the first successful speech neuroprosthesis — a brain-computer interface that restores communication for people living with paralysis. He is the Joan and Sanford I. Weill Chair and Margaret Liu Collins and Edward B. Collins Distinguished Professor in Neurological Surgery at the University of California, San Francisco.

ABSTRACT: When we listen to someone speak, we hear words effortlessly. Yet the sound itself is continuous, variable, and noisy. There are no clear boundaries between words, and the same word sounds different across speakers. Listeners also adapt rapidly to new voices, accents, and speaking rates. How the brain transforms this signal into meaningful units of language is a central question in neuroscience. Our work addresses this question with direct recordings from the human cortex. In patients undergoing neurosurgery, we record from high-density electrode arrays and from hundreds of single neurons using Neuropixels probes. These recordings show that the superior temporal gyrus does not simply represent the acoustics of speech. Neural populations encode phonetic features, the articulatory building blocks of consonants and vowels. Other populations track the onsets and rhythm of syllables, and others encode the pitch contours that carry intonation. Speech also reaches this region in parallel with primary auditory cortex, not only through a serial hierarchy. Single neurons across the cortical depth reveal that this code is organized at a fine spatial scale. Perception is also shaped by what we expect. When a sound is masked by noise, the cortex restores the missing phoneme in real time. Listening is an active process that combines the signal with prior knowledge of language. I will discuss what these findings reveal about the biological basis of speech perception. I will also consider what remains unknown, including how the brain segments continuous sound into words and links sound to meaning. These questions bear on long-standing debates about the nature of language.

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Thomas Jefferson Prize

William Christie

William Christie, harpsichordist, conductor, musicologist, and teacher, is the inspiration behind one of the most exciting musical adventures of the last 40 years. A pioneer in the rediscovery of Baroque music, he has introduced the repertoire of seventeenth and eighteenth century France to a very wide audience across the globe. Born in Buffalo, New York and educated at Havard and Yale, William Christie has lived in France since

1971. The turning point in his career came in 1979, when he founded Les ARts Florissants. Major public recognition came in 1987 with the production of Lully's *Atys* at the Opéra Comique in Paris. Wishing to develop further his work as a teacher, in 2002 William Christie created Le Jardin des Voix, Les Arts Florissant's biennial baroque Academy for young singers, now established at Thiré in Vendée. Since 2007 he has been an artist in residence at the Julliard School in New York, where he gives master classes twice a year.

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The Future of Human-Microbe Relationships

David Relman

David A. Relman, MD is the Thomas C. and Joan M. Merigan Professor in Medicine, Professor of Microbiology & Immunology, and Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University. He is also Chief of Infectious Diseases at the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System in Palo Alto, California. Relman was an early pioneer in the modern study of the human indigenous microbiota (microbiome). A landmark paper in 1999 and another in 2005 were among the first to describe the human oral and gut microbiota, respectively, with modern molecular methods. Most recently, his work has focused on human microbial community stability and resilience in the face of experimental perturbation, such as antibiotic exposure. Principles of disturbance and landscape ecology are tested in clinical studies of the human microbiome. Previous work included the development of methods for pathogen discovery, and the identification of several historically important and novel microbial disease agents. He has advised the U.S. Government on emerging infectious diseases, human-microbe interactions, and future biological threats. He served as a founding member of the National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity, a member of the Intelligence Community Studies Board at the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, Chair of the Boards of Scientific Counselors at the National Institute for Dental and Craniofacial Research and at the National Center for Biotechnology Information, both at NIH, and as President of the Infectious Diseases Society of America. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology, a Member of the National Academy of Medicine, and a Member of the American Academy of Arts &

Sciences. From May 2024 to January 2025, he served as Senior Advisor in the Office of Pandemic Preparedness and Response policy at The White House.

ABSTRACT: Microbes, including viruses, have shaped human history in profound ways, both detrimental and beneficial. We understand this history through art, fossils, census records, and now examination of our own genome and those of the microbes in the world around us. The advent of molecular methods and tools has revealed that human-microbe relationships are largely symbiotic and co-evolved. But in the short-term, in the absence of adaptation to their host, the small minority of microbes that have adopted a "pathogenic lifestyle" can cause significant harm. So far, this minority comprises only naturally occurring organisms. But this is unlikely to remain true for much longer. The future that we have created for ourselves will feature all the extant naturally occurring pathogens known to us today, plus a variety of others. On the one hand, rapid changes in land use, urbanization, and climate will impose selective pressure on, and offer new opportunities for naturally occurring pathogens. But importantly, we can expect that unnatural pathogens of human design and creation, increasingly enabled by artificial intelligence tools and models, will account for an ever-growing impact on human, animal, plant and environmental health. These future scenarios pose fundamental questions about how we choose to anticipate, manage, and mitigate the associated threats. Such questions should not be left to scientists and technologists. A recent effort to assess and address the potential consequences of building a proposed, non-natural, "mirror" synthetic cell offers some hope that international governance of large-scale risk is tractable.

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Why We Die: The New Science of Aging and the Quest for Immortality

Venki Ramikrishnan

Venkatraman 'Venki' Ramakrishnan is a Nobel Prize-winning biologist whose many scientific contributions include his work on the atomic structure of the ribosome. As the site within living cells where the genetic information is read to synthesise proteins from amino acids, improved understanding of the ribosome has yielded many fundamental biological insights. He determined the atomic structure of the 30S ribosomal subunit followed by structures of the entire ribosome in many different states and in complexes with several antibiotics. More recently, he has been using electron microscopy to

visualise ribosomes in action in higher organisms. This work has advanced our understanding of how the ribosome works and how antibiotics inhibit it. In the past he has also worked on histone and chromatin structure, which help us to understand how DNA is organised in cells.

ABSTRACT: The knowledge of aging and death has driven human culture, including our religions, ever since we became aware of our mortality. For much of our existence there was not much we could do about it, but over the past few decades, biology has made major advances in our understanding of the causes of aging, thus for the first time opening up the possibility of intervening in the process. At the same time, the combination of longer lives and reduced fertility rates means that many societies are faced with an aging population. This has led to a large amount of investment in aging research from governments as well as private industry funded largely by tech billionaires, and led to both real advances and a large amount of hype. In this talk I will discuss some of the key findings about why and how we age and die and prospects for the future. I will also talk a bit about the possible consequences of societies with extremely long-lived populations.

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The Possibility of Rejuvenation

Juan Carlos Izpisua Belmonte

During life's early stages cells display high levels of plasticity, regeneration and resilience against stress, dysfunction and injury, which are key features of human health. Juan Carlos, previously the Roger Guillemin Chair and Professor at the Salk Institute, has contributed towards understanding the molecular basis underlying embryogenesis and early postnatal life, as well as gained insights into how to program and rejuvenate adult and diseased cells. He is developing technologies to program cells to states similar to those observed in the early, healthy stages of life, with the objective of developing universal health therapeutics to overcome human disease and aging.

ABSTRACT: Aging has long been regarded as an inevitable consequence of the passage of time. Biology, however, is beginning to challenge how inevitable its effects may be. The discovery that a mature cell can be returned to an embryonic-like state by activating only a few genes revealed the remarkable plasticity of cellular identity. It also revealed something unexpected: along the way, many features associated with cellular aging are erased. This raised a fundamental question: must a cell give up its identity in order to rejuvenate? Our recent work suggests that it does not. By engineering the factors that

control cell behavior and identity, we can redirect old cells toward younger functional states without erasing their identity. In aged animals, these interventions can restore tissue organization and function across multiple cell types and generate lasting resilience to subsequent injury. Rejuvenation may therefore be possible without returning cells to an embryonic state. These findings suggest a broader way of thinking about aging. Aging may reflect not only the accumulation of molecular damage, but also progressive changes in how cells function, maintain their identity, and communicate with one another, changes that may remain surprisingly plastic even late in life. Old tissues may therefore retain a latent capacity to recover features of youth. I will discuss what these findings may tell us about the nature of aging, and the larger question they raise: we cannot reverse the passage of time, but can we reverse what time does to our biology?

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The Role of Learned Academies in the 21st Century

Frederick Lawrence
Frederick M. Lawrence is the 10th Secretary and CEO of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, the nation's first and most prestigious honor society, founded in 1776. Lawrence is a Distinguished Lecturer at the Georgetown Law Center, and has previously served as president of Brandeis University, Dean of the George Washington University Law School, and Visiting Professor and Senior Research Scholar at Yale Law School. He was elected to the American Philosophical Society in 2018 and the American Law Institute in 1999. An accomplished scholar, teacher and attorney, Lawrence is one of the nation's leading experts on higher education law, civil rights, free expression and bias crimes. Lawrence has published widely and lectured internationally. He is the author of Punishing Hate: Bias Crimes Under American Law (Harvard University Press 1999), examining bias-motivated violence and the laws governing how such violence is punished in the United States. Lawrence has testified before Congress concerning free expression on campus and on federal hate crime legislation. He frequently contributes op-eds to various news sources and has appeared on CNN, MSNBC and Fox News among other networks.

Laurie Patton
Laurie L. Patton currently serves as the President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. At the Academy, her first years have focused on engaging members in strengthening democracy, developing dynamic intellectual resources, learning from the

local, and advancing the free pursuit of knowledge. A scholar, poet, translator, and educational leader, she was the first female President of Middlebury College from 2015–2025, Dean of Arts & Sciences and Durden Professor of Religion at Duke University, and Inaugural Director of the Center for Faculty Development and Candler Professor of Religion at Emory University. She began her career at Bard College. At Middlebury, Patton raised over $600 million to begin a groundbreaking program in conflict transformation as a liberal art, a decade-long initiative to make the college the first of its size to be entirely powered by renewable fuels, and a new museum focused on democracy and the arts. Patton is a scholar of Indian religions, and religion and the public square. She has authored or edited twelve books and seventy articles in these fields. She is the translator of the classical Sanskrit text, The Bhagavad Gita, for Penguin Classics Series, and has lectured widely on interfaith issues and questions of religion, conflict, and civic life. She is also the author of three books of poems: Fire's Goal: Poems from a Hindu Year (2003), Angel's Task: Poems in Biblical Time (2011), and House Crossing (2018). Patton served as the President of the American Society for the Study of Religion from 2007–2010 and of the American Academy of Religion in 2019. She has received honorary degrees from Rutgers University and Hebrew Union College, as well as the Samuel Dubois Cook Award for social activism and leadership from Duke University and the Concordia Leadership Award for Civil Society from The Concordia Leadership Council. Patton was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2018.

Patrick Spero

Patrick Spero received his B.A. from James Madison University in 2000, his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 2004 and 2009 respectively. He held a number of public history jobs while pursuing his Ph.D., including serving has Historian at the David Library of the American Revolution. From 2009-2011, he served as the Pew Post-Doctoral Fellow in Bibliography at the American Philosophical Society Library, where he surveyed the Society's early American manuscript collections and wrote a guide to these collections. Dr. Spero then joined the faculty of Williams College until 2015, when he returned to the Society as its Librarian. Before joining the Society, Spero organized several international conferences and directed numerous teacher workshops. He is the author of numerous articles, essays, and reviews and has published two books, *Frontier Rebels: The Fight for Independence in the American West, 1765-1776* (W.W. Norton, 2018) and *Frontier Country: The Politics of War in Early Pennsylvania* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). He is also co-editor of The *American Revolution Reborn: New Perspectives for the Twenty-First Century* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).