

gencological studies on haemoglobin that biochemical systematics can be used to deduce phylogeny of living organisms, Barnabas decided to spend a sabbatical year during 1979–1980 at Georgetown University, USA, where he collaborated with Prof. Margaret Dayhoff. They studied the major metabolic innovations in the Precambrian using information from phylogenetic scheme based on the sequences of bacterial ferredoxins, 2Fe–2S ferredoxins, 5S ribosomal RNA and c-type cytochromes.

Barnabas was a Jawaharlal Nehru Fellow at the National Chemical Laboratory, Pune, from 1983 to 1985. During this time, he reviewed the available information, including his own, on evolutionary molecular biology and traced the outlines of evolution of three kingdoms of living organisms, namely, monerans, protists and animals. He also examined the evolution

of the chemistry of iso-prenoids along with the diversity spectrum of carotenoids in plastids in relation to both algal phylogeny and endosymbiotic origins of plastids.

Barnabas took up the position of the Head of the Division of Biochemical Sciences at National Chemical Laboratory, Pune, in mid 1985. In this capacity, he reorganized the research activities of the division to focus on four major areas: plant molecular biology and genetic engineering; structural and evolutionary biology; microbial technology and plant tissue culture technology. His research activities at NCL focused mainly on the evolutionary relationships of early eukaryotic lineages and major groups of land plants as well as the establishment of genetic relatedness of closely related mammalian species based on mitochondrial DNA analysis. He believed that

by reconstructing evolutionary trees based on sequence data of relevant proteins and nucleic acids using parsimony and bootstrap approaches, the history of living organisms from Archean to the Present could be retrieved. Further, by combining the information from these and other phylogenetic scheme with that from the traditional approach, which with its emphasis on fossil record gave the time dimension, one could discern the pattern of morphological change to obtain an overview of the evolution of prokaryotic and eukaryotic lineages.

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## Sir John Maddox

*Current Science* congratulates John Maddox, the editor of *Nature* who has been knighted in the New Year's Honours List. It is obviously a reward for his remarkable publishing record. It is said that Britain's share in the world of science has declined. But *Nature* remains preeminent as the world's most important single science journal. John Maddox trained as chemist, became a theoretical physicist before he turned to science journalism in 1955. He has kept *Nature* in front, ahead of all other science journals by publishing exciting results quickly and by making it truly international.

S. Ramaseshan (*Editor*)