



Lynn Margulis

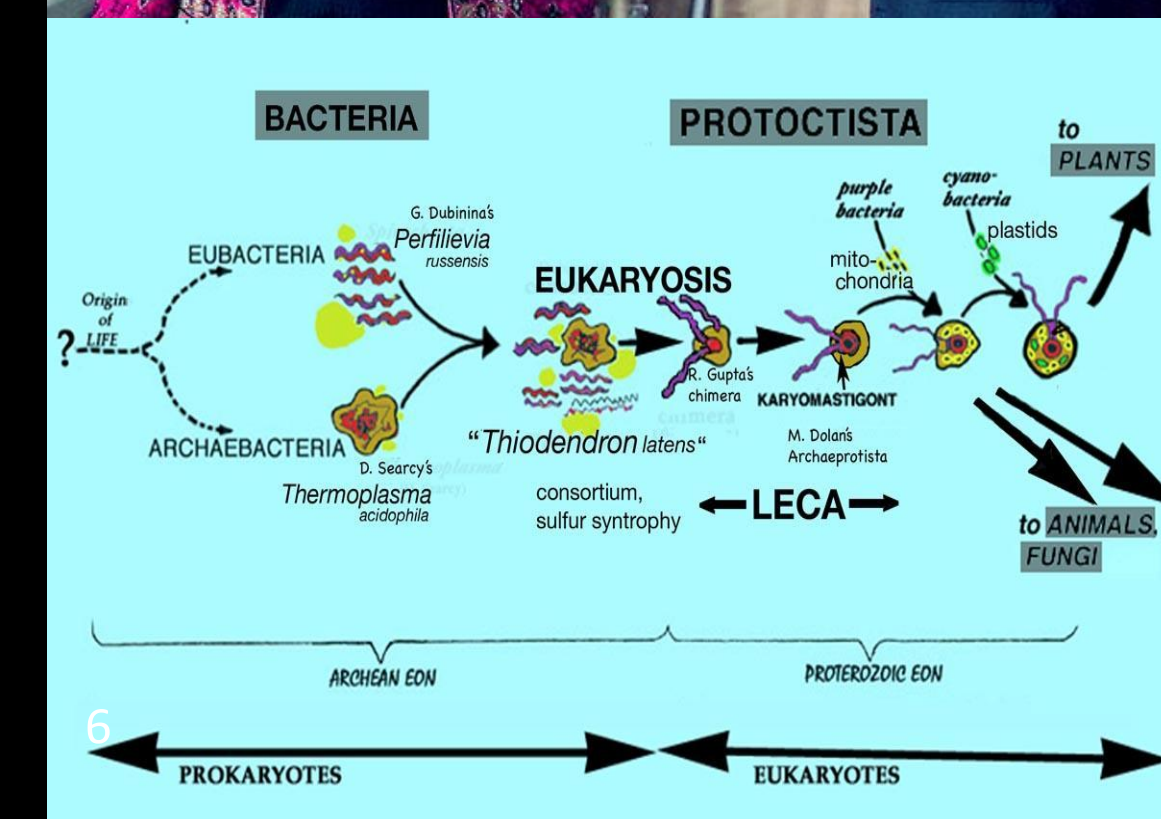
(1938-2011)

Lynn Margulis (1938-2011) was one of the most extraordinary scientists and thinkers in American history. In 1999, she was awarded the highest recognition that a scientist from the United States can receive -- the National Medal of Science from President Clinton.

Her fifty year career included important and close ties to the Boston University School of Education (SED). During the 1990s, even after she left Boston University for the University of Massachusetts, she returned often to give special workshops through the Microcosmos Project, which she co-founded with SED Professor and Biologist Douglas Zook. Local science teachers, as well as educators from all over the country attended her dynamic, often hands-on presentations. Through her instruction, Dr. Margulis showed the importance of microbial life to ourselves and to the planet, influencing the views and curriculums of thousands of middle, secondary, and even elementary teachers.

Dr. Margulis particularly emphasized the significance of symbiosis – intimate partnerships among different life forms in nature – in evolution and in our fundamental understanding of life on earth today. Indeed, she resurrected the once-forgotten concept that our cells and those of all animals, plants, fungi, and algae came about through bacteria merging with other bacteria rather than through a strictly gradual process based on mutational events. In 1990, she arranged for her Symbiosis course to be taught by Professor Zook, and it has been a popular and influential intellectual experience for students ever since. She paved the way for an ecological view that is global and which recognizes that life forms directly contribute to their own survival on a scale larger than the individual.

She was an exceptional educator, emphasizing inquiry, curiosity, and skepticism as tenets of science practice. Her books collected here reflect much of her extraordinary thinking, findings, ideas, and accomplishments. We invite you to read, ponder, use, question, and apply some of these readings to your studies, your work, your life. You, your students, and all those with whom you come in contact will be forever enriched.



1. Giving a talk on Gaia Science at Holyoke Community College on April 23, 2007 2. Working with visiting teachers from around the nation studying at SED as part of the Microcosmos Program, 1994 3. Spending time amongst some of her favorite organisms in a greenhouse, circa 1990 4. At SED with colleague and frequent collaborator Professor Douglas Zook as part of a lengthy interview filmed by videographer Michael Lee 5. Receiving the National Medal of Science from President Clinton, 1999 6. One of several highly influential schemes set forth by Dr. Margulis to explain the symbiotic evolution of eukaryotes 7. With her son and frequent co-author Dorion Sagan 8. Receiving recognition for her work on the potential of finding microbial life on other planets by NASA Astrobiology Program