

Dr. Kevin Padian,

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What Darwin Said (and Didn't Say): Evolution, "Intelligent Design," and Education

Rather than send an abstract, Dr. Padian sent a recent article he co-authored (a PDF copy is attached to this email but it is also available at the NCGS website). From the article's abstract we have extracted the following:

ID ('intelligent design') is not science, but a form of creationism; both are very different from the simple theological proposition that a divine Creator is responsible for the natural patterns and processes of the Universe. Its current version maintains that a 'Designer' must intervene miraculously to accomplish certain natural scientific events. The verdict in the 2005 case *Kitzmiller, et al. v. Dover School District, et al.* (in Harrisburg, PA, U.S.A.) was a landmark of American jurisprudence that prohibited the teaching of ID as science, identified it as religiously based, and forbade long-refuted 'criticisms of evolution' from introduction into public school classes. Much of the science of the trial was based on biochemistry; biochemists and other scientists have several important opportunities to improve scientific literacy and science education in American public schools ('state schools') by working with teachers, curriculum developers and textbook writers.

Biography: Dr. Kevin Padian has been a professor of evolutionary biology and a curator in the Museum of Paleontology at the University of California, Berkeley for 32 years. He is interested in the origin of major evolutionary adaptations, such as flight, and in the history of thought about biology and evolution. A lot of his focus is on the "age of dinosaurs" and how dinosaurs evolved into birds. Much of his current research is on how dinosaurs grew and how they lived. He has authored, co-authored, or edited about 100 scientific articles, 100 popular articles, and seven books. He has twice been named Professeur Invité at the Collège de France, as well as at the Université de Paris and the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle. In America, he has been a Distinguished Lecturer of Sigma Xi and has won the Carl Sagan Award for the Popularization of Science. He was recently named a Fellow of the AAAS and named Western Evolutionary Biologist of the Year in 2008. Dr. Padian is also the long-time President of the National Center for Science Education, the pre-eminent organization that explains the creationism vs. science issue to the public in the US. In 2005 he was an expert witness in the Dover, Pennsylvania "Intelligent Design" trial, which ruled that ID is not science and cannot be presented as science in classrooms, and that bogus "criticisms" of evolution cannot be introduced to undermine its teaching.