

From Functional Genomics to Enhanced Crops

Senator **Christopher (Kit) Bond** (R-MO) presented the keynote National Academy of Sciences (NAS) "Sackler Lecture" on April 3, 2006 at the Sackler Colloquium: "From Functional Genomics of Model Organisms to Crop Plants for Global Health."

Senator Bond is the champion of plant genome research in the U.S. Senate and a leading advocate for accepting modern technologies in plant science, such as biotechnology. He first sponsored the National Science Foundation's (NSF's) Plant Genome Research Program in 1997 and has been the leading supporter each year. The highly regarded Plant Genome Research Program has grown to \$100 million this year with Bond's leading support. The Department of Energy Office of Science and the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Research Initiative partner in plant genome research with NSF.

ASPB member **Roger Beachy** of the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center introduced Senator Bond after Beachy was introduced by NAS President **Ralph Cicerone**. Beachy and ASPB members **Bob Goldberg** of the University of California, Los Angeles, and **Diter Von Wettstein** of Washington State University organized the NAS colloquia, which was attended by some 150 scientists.

Senator Bond said he and Beachy had recently returned from a visit to India to discuss opportunities for scientists in India and the United States to partner in plant science research. Efforts by Senator Bond contributed to a cooperative research effort between the two nations. Bond is the leading emissary of Congress to science communities in Asian nations. He is a tireless advocate for world acceptance of modern plant science technologies as well as U.S.-produced, enhanced agricultural products. ASPB President **Michael Thomashow** of Michigan State University joined Bond and Beachy on the most recent visit to India.

Reflecting on his last election campaign, Bond said that despite experienced campaign advisers' wishes, he made a point of speaking on the need for modern plant research and acceptance of plant biotechnology in his campaign appearances. Those comments were generally met with silence and blank faces, he recalled. Undeterred, he continued to include this exhortation for science on the stump. Finally, at the University of Missouri in Columbia, there was a discernible positive reaction: "Six people even clapped," Bond said.

At the Sackler Lecture, Senator Bond encouraged members of the science community to increase education outreach efforts supporting science.



ASPB member scientists in Missouri (four of whom are in accompanying photos) are represented by the leading supporter of plant research in the Senate, Senator Christopher Bond. Senator Bond is joined by Roger Beachy, Sackler Colloquium organizer (upper left); Ralph Quatrano, ASPB past president (upper right); and Jill Sackler, Henry Nguyen, and Doug Randall (center photo). Bob Goldberg, Sackler Colloquium organizer, is shown at right.



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