

# NEWS RELEASE

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May 9, 2003

## NC State Geneticist Weir Wins UNC System's O. Max Gardner Award

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dr. Bruce S. Weir, William Neal Reynolds Professor of statistics and genetics at North Carolina State University and one of the world's foremost researchers on statistical analysis of DNA for forensic, human health, and agricultural applications, will be honored today (May 9) with the O. Max Gardner Award, the highest faculty award presented by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina.



Dr. Bruce S. Weir

The award is presented each year to one faculty member from the system's 16 campuses recognized as having "made the greatest contribution to the welfare of the human race." The award will be presented to Weir by UNC President Molly Corbett Broad and Willie J. Gilchrist, chairman of the 2003 UNC Board of Governors' Gardner Award Committee, at today's meeting of the board at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

Weir developed statistical tests of the frequency of genetic profiles that are now the standard for evaluating DNA evidence in forensic cases. He spearheaded reforms to the national guidelines on forensic DNA analyses, was instrumental in achieving acceptance of DNA evidence in courtrooms, and is co-author of the definitive textbook on statistical inference in forensics.

Weir also established statistical measures of genetic linkage that are critical for mapping genes associated with human disease. The methods are widely used in gene mapping studies of complex traits such as diabetes and longevity.

Weir's seminal work in genetic descent and recombination in inbred and mixed populations laid the foundation for describing genetic differentiation among groups of animals and plants and has led to continuing improvements in crop and livestock breeding.

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Weir is the fifth NC State faculty member to win the Gardner Award in the past eight years. The Gardner award was presented in 1999 to NC State's Dr. Jim E. Riviere, Burroughs Wellcome Fund Distinguished Professor in veterinary pharmacology. In 1998 it was awarded to Dr. B. Jayant Baliga, Distinguished University Professor of engineering; in 1997 to Dr. Wayne R. Skaggs, William Neal Reynolds Professor and Distinguished University Professor of biological and agricultural engineering; and in 1996 to Dr. Ernest Hodgson, William Neal Reynolds Professor of toxicology.

Weir is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and of the American Statistical Association and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand.

Weir received his Ph.D. in statistics, with a minor in genetics, from NC State in 1968 and joined the faculty in 1976 as a professor of statistics. He is head of the program in statistical genetics, director of the NIH program grant in statistical and quantitative genetics, founder and manager of the annual Summer Institute in Statistical Genetics, and founding director of the Bioinformatics Research Center. The program he heads is widely recognized as one of the world's leading research and graduate training centers for the design and application of computational and statistical methods to problems in genomics.

Prior to joining NC State's faculty, Weir was senior lecturer and reader in mathematics at Massey University in Palmerston North, New Zealand. He received his bachelor's degree in 1965 at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, and did post-doctoral work in genetics at the University of California-Davis. Weir is the author or co-author of seven books and more than 150 papers.