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To all our NCSE supporters,

We're writing to you today because of an experience we shared that you might have heard about. It was certainly one of the most rewarding of our professional lives.

All three of us served as expert witnesses in the Dover "intelligent design" trial.

And all three of us are NCSE board members.

You probably know that the Dover, Pennsylvania, school board lost a lawsuit over its policy requiring the teaching of "intelligent design" and "gaps/problems in Darwin's theory." The victory in the Dover trial was an incredible milestone for the integrity of science and of science education in America. The judge's decision, delivered in 139 pages of concise, clear, unambiguous prose, left no doubt of his concurrence with all three major findings that our side proposed:

1. "Intelligent design" is religion, not science.
2. The Dover school board intended to promote religion by passing the "intelligent design" policy.
3. Bogus "evidence against" evolution has no scientific support and cannot be presented as science in public school classrooms.

Creationists at the Discovery Institute and elsewhere could not have found a single sentence in the judge's decision to be happy about. Having lost every argument, their response was to "swift-boat" Judge John E. Jones III, calling this conservative Republican, church-going, Bush-appointed judge a "judicial activist" who overstepped his authority by defining science. Ironically, as transcripts show (available on the NCSE website, of course!), both sides agreed that divine cause is outside science; the judge agreed that ID is outside of standard science. In agreeing that ID is not science, the judge merely ruled on a question that both sides asked him to decide.

The Dover verdict was a wonderful victory for education and for rationality. Within hours after the decision, legislative bills across the country were being reconsidered, attempts to instill ID curricula were put on hold, and the spinmeisters of the ID machine predictably went into full gyroscopic mode.

But none of the spin mattered. As a purported scientific idea, ID had been examined and rejected by the scientific community well before the trial. Now, before an unbiased judge, after ID's advocates presented the best "science" they could muster, the rest of the world was unambiguously made aware of what we knew all along: ID doesn't follow the ground rules of science, and what factual claims it makes are just dead wrong.

Everyone acknowledges that the trial would not have been the complete success it was without the help of NCSE. Donations from NCSE members like you made this victory possible. From the beginning, the small but hard-working NCSE staff consulted with the attorneys about the scientific and educational issues, explaining the history and present arguments of the creationists — and of course, their scientific flaws. NCSE helped to develop the plaintiffs' strategy, recommended the expert witnesses, and assigned the points to be covered by each. The central question of the trial became not only whether the Dover School Board acted with religious intent, but whether ID was valid science, and whether “criticisms” of evolution that had no scientific validation should be taught in public schools.

Without your help as NCSE supporters, we would not have had this staff in place. We could not have sent Nick Matzke to the trial for six weeks to provide constant advice, reaction, and feedback to the attorneys. We could not have sent Genie Scott and other staff to assist with particular witnesses and press barrages. We could not have maintained the NCSE archives, which among other things were invaluable to the legal team in providing critically important information on the history of the ID textbook *Of Pandas and People*. After examining old records carefully maintained by NCSE over the years, we suggested to the lawyers that there might be early manuscripts of *Pandas* that would be explicitly creationist. When the manuscripts were subpoenaed, they powerfully demonstrated the creation science roots of intelligent design — even showing the direct substitution of the words “intelligent design” for “creationism.”

This was a knockout punch for our side. Even if the plaintiffs had presented no other evidence in the trial, this would have been enough to prove that ID is a religious concept.

We want to thank you for your support. Without you, NCSE could not have helped make the case for science, education, and rationality as cogent as it was. You deserve to share in this victory.

But, of course, it's not over, and NCSE continues to need your support. ID advocate William Dembski defiantly stated, “This galvanizes the Christian community. People I'm talking to say we're going to be raising a whole lot more funds now.” And they'll be putting that money to work promoting their sectarian religious views.

The Dover decision will make it more difficult for ID policies to be passed, but creationism keeps evolving. We know that on the “scientific” front, they'll continue their claims against legitimate evolutionary science, and they'll flog a hoary concept called “abrupt appearance” to try to confuse people about the evidence for macroevolutionary change. They'll succeed in quarters where ignorance persists — and shining a candle in that particular darkness is one of NCSE's tasks.

On the “pedagogical” front, the efforts of the creationists will become more pernicious: they will claim that they are only asking to “teach the controversy,” to allow “critical thinking,” to avoid “viewpoint discrimination” and dogmatism. This plays well in a country founded on equality and fairness.

NCSE shows the public that creationists are not really asking for true critical thinking, that they do not want fairness, and that the “controversy” they describe is bogus. And “balancing” good science with bogus criticisms of science and with religious ideas taught as science is hardly good pedagogy.

We need you to help us anticipate and counter the next creationist assaults. They've already begun. Bills have been introduced in legislatures to foster “critical thinking” about evolution, based on a template devised by the Discovery Institute. School districts are being lobbied to pass policies promoting the same back-door form of creationism. Teachers, parents, and local officials are not prepared for this onslaught. They need NCSE's help.

With your contribution, we'll be able to make sure that they'll get it.

As always, NCSE is offering a variety of thoughtfully selected gift premiums in return for your generous contributions. (We are also, as usual, offering you the chance to renew your membership/subscription at the regular \$30 rate; please remember that renewals are treated separately from donations, so if you wish to renew *and* donate, add \$30 to your donation amount.)

Your \$25 donation will be rewarded with Keith Thomson's *Fossils: A Very Short Introduction*. Thomson offers a remarkably complete — and remarkably readable — account of fossils in a remarkably brief space.

Send NCSE \$50, and in return we will send you David P. Mindell's *The Evolving World: Evolution in Everyday Life*, of which Michael Ruse writes, "This wonderful book should be put in the hands of every student, every teacher, every person in America today."

For a donation of \$100, you will receive Carl Zimmer's *Smithsonian Intimate Guide to Human Origins*. With engaging text and spectacular photographs, it's the perfect way to get acquainted, or reacquainted, with your extended family.

At the \$200 level, it's *From So Simple a Beginning*, which collects four of Darwin's greatest books — *Voyage of the H.M.S. Beagle*, *On the Origin of Species*, *The Descent of Man*, and *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals* — in one beautifully slip-covered volume, edited by the eminent biologist E. O. Wilson.

And finally, those of you who contribute \$300 will receive a copy of Douglas J. Futuyma's *Evolution*, the ideal reference on evolutionary biology to add to your bookshelf.

Our Patrons' Circle is reserved for those members who are able to send us donations of \$1000 or more — a particularly valuable level of support. Members of the Patrons' Circle will receive all of the premiums listed in this letter — from *Fossils: A Very Short Introduction* to Futuyma's *Evolution*.

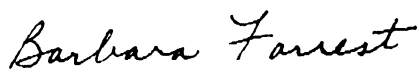
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We ask you to give all you can to this effort. Please renew if you're a member, and donate whatever you can. If you're not a member, please join us. Get your friends and colleagues to join. Think how good you'll feel being part of the victory in Dover. After the trial, we expert witnesses and the NCSE staff were on top of the world. There is no feeling of satisfaction like the one you get when you can explain in a public forum, to ordinary people, under oath, what science is really about. This was the greatest opportunity a scientist or educator could ever have. This was a huge win, thanks to the plaintiffs who weathered tremendous public criticism, the hard work of the lawyers and witnesses, and their very important advisors at NCSE. We hope that you'll help NCSE be there for the next round.

Sincerely,



Kevin Padian
President



Barbara Forrest
Board Member



Brian J. Alters
Board Member

May we have your e-mail address?

Incidents of antievolutionary activity often require swift coordinated local action, and the fastest and most efficient way for NCSE to get in touch with its members when creationism threatens is by e-mail. Your privacy is safe: we will not sell or otherwise share your e-mail address. Either e-mail your e-mail address to us at ncse@ncseweb.org or write it below.

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