

WITS

women in technology
and science

WITS UPDATE

Spring 2003

Leinster Events

March 12th Launch of the Talent Bank Project

The Minister of State, Mr. Willie O'Dea, officially launched the Talent Bank Project at the RDS on March 12th. The launch was well attended and received media coverage in the RTE 1 9.00 o'clock news that evening, an article in The Irish Times on Thursday, March 13, two subsequent radio interviews, and articles in Technology Ireland and The Engineers Journal. The Talent Bank Project will involve the production of a directory of at least 200 qualified women with public sector, academic or industrial expertise in the SET sectors. **WITS** will circulate the database to nominating bodies as a way to increase representation and opportunity for women on boards, such as those of State owned companies, IBEC, the Trade Unions, 3rd level universities, the Health Board, and County Councils.

WITS have procured a project manager for the Talent Bank Project, Ms. Elizabeth Creed. Anyone who wishes to be considered for the Talent Bank directory is encouraged to send a cover letter with a brief synopsis of their expertise, and a copy of their curriculum vitae by post or e-mail to:

Elizabeth Creed
Project Manger
WITS Talent Bank Project
P.O. Box 2
Kinsale, Co Cork

lizcreed@eircom.net

Nominations of suitable candidates are also being sought. If you know of someone you wish to nominate, please forward their contact details to Elizabeth Creed. **The closing date for all submissions is July 31st, 2003.**

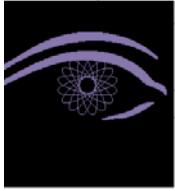
Leinster Events Cont'd.

April 8th "Rosalind Franklin - The Dark Lady of DNA" - Lecture by Biographer Brenda Maddox



(1920-1958)

In association with the RDS and The Irish Times, **WITS** sponsored a lecture with Brenda Maddox, the author of "*Rosalind Franklin - The Dark Lady of DNA*". To get closer to the real Rosalind Franklin, Maddox used letters written to family and friends, laboratory notebooks, published and unpublished manuscripts, and conducted interviews with many of the central characters. Maddox focused on Franklin's substantial academic achievements - it is often forgotten that her career extended much further than her time working on DNA at King's College. Franklin received her Ph.D. in physical chemistry from the University of Cambridge when women were still excluded from receiving undergraduate degrees. She spent time in Paris where she learned the techniques of X-ray crystallography and authored numerous publications. She stayed in Paris for four happy years, where she was accepted as an equal. Upon her return to King's College London, Franklin was appointed to lead a research team investigating the structure of certain biological fibres. While Franklin understood that she was to head up the research on X-ray crystallography,



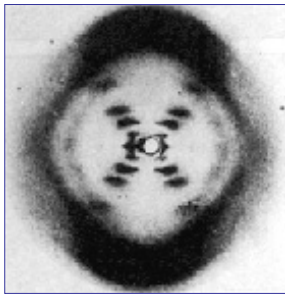
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Maurice Wilkins assumed that Rosalind was working for him. This led to an inharmonious work situation that was never to be resolved. During this time through her meticulous approach to her work, Franklin produced the data that would contribute to the discovery of the structure of DNA. Her well-known x-ray diffraction image of DNA was simply labelled as Photo No. 51.



(X-ray Diffraction Image of DNA,
Known as Photo No 51. 1953)

It was this photo that provided the crucial evidence to support the theory of the double helix structure of DNA and it was used without Rosalind's knowledge or permission for an article published in Nature magazine written by James Watson.

In 1953, Franklin moved to Birkbeck College, where she was to establish a successful research group and become a world leader in the study of the structure of the tobacco mosaic virus.

Rosalind then discovered she had ovarian cancer. After less than two years of surgery and novel chemotherapy treatment, Rosalind died in 1958, at the age of thirty-seven, working until a few weeks up to her death. In 1962, four years after her death, the Nobel Prize was given to Maurice Wilkins, James Watson, and Francis Crick for their work and contribution to unraveling the structure of DNA. No mention, credit, or acknowledgment was given to Rosalind and this remains a controversial and much debated topic to this day.

MUNSTER EVENT

March 20th/21st Institute of Guidance Teachers Conference – Cork

By invitation from The Department of Education and Science, Eucharia Meehan attended the Institute of Guidance Teachers Conference held in Cork on March 20th and 21st. Eucharia exhibited and promoted The Role Model Project, highlighting the forthcoming launch of the Role Model Profiles CD and website. Great interest and response was received from attendees!



WITS Chairperson Dr. Eucharia Meehan promoting The Role Model Project and CD at the Institute of Guidance Teachers Conference

OTHER NEWS OF INTEREST

New Patron - **WITS** is pleased to announce its new patron President Mary McAleese.

New Corporate Members - **WITS** welcomes its two new corporate members IBM-Ireland and Sustainable Energy Ireland.

"Let Go, Lighten Up & Get On With It!"TM - Cathy W. Lauro will present an evening of discussion on **Personal and Professional Success Strategies** with her popular presentation topic "Let Go, Lighten Up & Get On With It!" **WITS** have negotiated a *very special* price of only €15.00 per person for this evening event! Mark your calendars for Monday night, May 19th, 2003, 7.00 - 8.30 p.m., The Fitzwilliam Hotel, St. Stephens Green, Dublin 2, for a night of inspiration and motivation! Seating is limited to 40 spaces, so reserve your space by e-mail to Elaine Harris, elaineha@gofree.indigo.ie, now! Payment by check or cash only please on the night of the event.