

Looking Back a Decade

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The Center for Genetics and Society has been active for about a decade, and at the start of a new one it seems appropriate to take a look back. This is by no means a complete history, but a series of pointers that make a very broad-brush look at the last ten years.



Much more about everything mentioned can be found by searching the [website](#), in addition to the links provided.

2000

- Announcement of the [draft sequence of the human genome](#)
- Controversy over the 1999 [death of Jesse Gelsinger](#) following a gene therapy experiment
- Bill Joy cites dangers of genetic engineering, nanotech & robotics in [Wired](#)
- Council for Responsible Genetics issues "[Genetic Bill of Rights](#)"
- CGS strategy meetings, briefings and sign-on letter, "[Say No to Human Germline Engineering](#)," for Asilomar Symposium on Science, Ethics and Society

2001

- Genetic Savings and Clone tries to launch [pet-cloning industry](#), after the first cloned cat
- ACT [falsely claims to have created the first clonal human embryo](#)
- [President Bush](#) permits federal funds for research on existing stem cell lines only; establishes Bioethics Commission chaired by Leon Kass
- Council of Europe [Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine](#) enters into force, banning inheritable genetic modification, human reproductive cloning and research cloning, and regulating other human biotechnologies
- CGS formally [established](#); joins with Global Lawyers & Physicians and others to organize the [Beyond Cloning](#) conference at Boston University

2002

- [Cloning hoaxes](#) hit the headlines: Raelians, Antinori, Zavos
- [United Nations](#) launches process for international convention to ban human cloning; [U.S. Senate](#) deadlocked on cloning; [California](#) bans reproductive cloning, allows cloning-based stem cell research

- World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA, originally set up by the International Olympic Committee) [bans gene doping](#)
- Craig Venter announces [intention to create first artificial life](#)
- CGS website [goes online](#), [first op-eds](#) published; sign-on [letter to U.S. Senators on cloning legislation](#) with 100+ liberal and progressive leaders; open letter on [sex selection](#) to American Society for Reproductive Medicine, which soon [revised](#) its position; briefings for press, UN delegates, NGOs; [World Watch](#) magazine special issue on human biotech, guest-edited by CGS

2003

- First [cloned mules, horses, deer, rats](#); first genetically modified animal to be sold as a pet, the "[Glofish](#)"
- [Gene therapy trials cause leukemia](#) in French children
- [Sperm and eggs](#) derived from mouse embryonic stem cells
- Spread of commercial [advertisements for sex selection](#)
- CGS briefings and meetings in U.S., Paris, Brussels, Strasbourg, Bonn, Berlin, Geneva, Zurich [[pdf](#)]; co-sponsors major international conference [Within and Beyond the Limits of Human Nature](#), in Berlin with Heinrich Boell Foundation, IMEW

2004

- In Korea, Hwang Woo Suk [claims to have created clonal human embryos](#), and later to have derived stem cells from them; [California voters approve Proposition 71](#) to fund stem cell research
- Mice genetically modified for [increased muscle mass](#)
- [Canada enacts Assisted Human Reproduction Law](#), regulating research and clinical applications involving human eggs, sperm and embryos, and prohibiting the creation of new embryos for research, including cloning; UK authority officially allows the creation of "[savior siblings](#)" to act as donors for children suffering from certain diseases
- [First Synthetic Biology conference](#) held at MIT
- CGS presents at World Social Forum in Mumbai and at World Congress of Bioethics, in Sydney, Australia [[pdf](#)]; with the Committee on Women, Population and the Environment and Our Bodies Ourselves, co-sponsors conference on [Gender, Justice and the Gene Age](#), NYC; issues [critical analysis of California's stem cell initiative](#); organizes symposia with the Century Foundation and the City University of New York; launches Gender, Justice and Human Genetics program [[pdf](#)]

2005

- [Korean cloning claims found to be fabricated](#); Hwang Woo Suk eventually disgraced amid [scandal](#) of false data, embezzlement, & improper [egg acquisition](#)
- First [cloned dog](#) (Korea), [face transplant](#) (France)

- Human embryonic stem cell research remains a significant political topic, with policy debates in [numerous jurisdictions](#)
- U.N. ends [debate on human cloning treaty](#) with inconclusive non-binding resolution
- CGS holds meetings and briefings in U.S., Brazil, Costa Rica, El Salvador, India and Thailand [[pdf](#)]; puts public pressure on California stem cell institute, resulting in greater transparency and accountability; receives "Local Heroes" award [[pdf](#)] from *San Francisco Bay Guardian*

2006

- Survey finds almost half of U.S. fertility clinics offer [non-medical sex selection](#)
- First [scientific meetings](#) on the [risks of providing eggs for research](#); California approves bill [protecting women egg donors](#), following advocacy by CGS and the [Pro-Choice Alliance for Responsible Research](#)
- [Media attention](#) to Synthetic Biology; researchers call for [self-governance](#); [civil society protests](#)
- [President Bush vetoes Castle-DeGette bill](#) to expand the number of stem-cell lines available for federally funded research
- CGS publishes *The California Stem Cell Program at One Year: A Progress Report* [[pdf](#)]; Century Foundation publishes *Stem Cells and Public Policy* [[pdf](#)], by CGS staff; continued briefings and workshops, in U.S. and Korea, many with focus on gender and justice [[pdf](#)]; CGS blog, [Biopolitical Times](#), goes online

2007

- Craig Venter announces [replacement of bacterial genome](#), key step towards artificial life, [files patent](#)
- California issues [first U.S. public funding of cloning-based stem cell research](#); Harvard [unable to get women to provide eggs](#) for similar research
- Genes for [skin color](#) identified and proposed for general use by consumers; [egg freezing](#) increasingly available and promoted, despite [medical concerns](#); Texas fertility center offers "[custom designed](#)" embryos; new [at-home tests](#) allow expectant mother to determine sex of future child at six weeks
- [23andMe](#) set to offer complete personal genomic sequencing, [Google invests](#); launch of [direct-to-consumer ads](#) for [genetic tests](#)
- CGS conducts briefings in D.C., Amsterdam, South Africa [[pdf](#)]; hosts Harvard professor [Michael Sandel](#), author of *The Case Against Perfection*, at events in Berkeley; roundtable discussions with disability rights and reproductive rights leaders; strong CGS [response to iPS announcements](#): [several op-eds](#), press citations, TV & radio interviews, letters; new website launched

2008

- [Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act](#) (GINA) signed into law in U.S.; consumer genetic testing companies face regulators in [California](#), [New York](#)
- Improvements in producing stem cells via [reprogramming](#); Ian [Wilmut quits cloning-based stem cell research](#); first [clonal human embryo](#), first [genetically modified human embryo](#) and first [animal-human cytoplasmic hybrid embryo](#)
- Reports that IVF greatly increases [birth defects](#), and fertility drugs [increase cancer risk](#); first [ovary transplant](#); eggs grown from [five-year-old girls' ovarian tissue](#); [egg freezing](#) becomes more widely available; push for payments for eggs for stem cell research in [California](#), [Singapore](#)
- U.S. federal government [expands collection of DNA to all people arrested](#) for federal crimes and immigration charges; [European court rules against UK DNA database](#)
- CGS's Gender and Justice program becomes an independent organization, [Generations Ahead](#); CGS testifies at U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade [hearing on international regulation of human biotech](#); invited to meet with members of the Obama transition team in Washington DC; co-publishes [Geneticizing Disease: Implications for Racial Health Disparities](#) with Center for American Progress; holds invitational strategy sessions in Washington, New York, Cambridge, San Francisco and Berkeley; op-eds, TV/radio interviews, and citations in major media outlets on many issues; [BioPolicy Wiki](#) launched, compiling laws on eight biotechnology practices and positions on five international conventions in 194 countries

2009

- The birth of the only fully surviving set of [octuplets](#) triggers unprecedented [criticism](#), and [calls for regulation](#) of [assisted reproduction](#); an offer of pre-pregnancy [genetic selection for hair, skin and eye color is](#) discontinued after [CGS condemns it](#)
- President Obama [expands federal funding for stem cell research](#), draws line at research cloning and chimeras, and [condemns reproductive cloning](#), saying it "has no place in our society, or any society"
- [DNA databases](#) become increasingly controversial, but [continue to expand](#)
- The [ACLU and the Public Patent Foundation](#) filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of human gene patents; CGS and others filed an [amicus brief](#) in support, as did many other groups
- CGS published [Playing the Gene Card?](#) a report on race-specific drugs, genetic ancestry tests and DNA forensics; submitted [Responsible Federal Oversight of the New Human Biotechnologies](#) to the new administration; published numerous op-eds and major articles; and began an active and continuing round of consultations with other activists and interested parties about possible directions for the next decade