



Biographical sketch of Mark Lathrop

Renowned Canadian genomics pioneer Mark Lathrop has been most recently the scientific director of the Centre National de Genotypage (CNG) and of the Fondation Jean Dausset Centre d'Étude du Polymorphisme Humain (CEPH) in Paris, two of the major centres for large-scale biological research established by the French government. The principal goal of these centres is to apply genomics and other large-scale methodologies to understanding human disease.

Born in 1950 in Alberta, Dr. Lathrop completed his Bachelor of Science and Master's degrees at the University of Alberta before obtaining his PhD at the University of Washington (Seattle) in biomathematics.

He then moved to France, where he was one of the founders of the CEPH, which pioneered international collaboration on the human genome in the 1980s and 1990s.

In 1993, Dr. Lathrop moved to the University of Oxford, where he was a Wellcome Trust Principal Fellow and Professor of Human Genetics. At the University of Oxford, he was the co-founder and first scientific director of the Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics, an institute created to apply genomic approaches to understanding the molecular basis of human disease. He also co-founded the biotechnology company Oxagen while at the University of Oxford.

At the request of the French government, Dr. Lathrop returned to France in 1998 to found the CNG as the principal national centre for human genetic studies. The CNG has established itself as the leading centre for large-scale genetic studies in Europe, and has created two spin-off biotechnology companies. In 2005, the French government asked Dr. Lathrop to serve as the scientific director of the CEPH.

Dr. Lathrop is the author of more than 600 scientific papers in genetics, genomics and statistics. He was a major contributor to the first- and second-generation genetic maps (based respectively on RFLP and microsatellite markers), used to develop molecular and bioinformatics tools to assist with the discovery of genes responsible for many Mendelian diseases.

Dr. Lathrop has also made major contributions to genetic approaches for the study of models of human disease in other mammalian species. His present scientific studies focus on using genetic and other high-throughput genomic approaches to identify DNA variants that predispose people to common diseases, particularly, lung cancer, asthma and cardiovascular disease, and to understand the effects of these in a biological and public health context. Dr. Lathrop is responsible for the scientific program of the French National Programme in Cancer Genomics.

Dr. Lathrop is also visiting Professor of Human Genetics at the Institute of Medical Sciences at the University of Tokyo and has negotiated collaborations with several major pharmaceutical partners for disease studies (Astra Zeneca, Merck, Lilly, Sanofi Aventis) and technology development (Roche Molecular Systems).

He serves or has served as a scientific advisor to many public and private initiatives in genomics. He chaired the Scientific Advisory Committee for Life Sciences, Genomics and Biotechnology for Health, a 2.3-billion Euro funding initiative within the European Union's 6th Framework Programme. He presently chairs the Scientific Advisory Board for Japan's renowned Riken Center for Genomic Medicine, and he is a member the Riken Scientific Council.

Distinctions he has received for scientific activities include the French National Award of Merit and the French Legion of Honour.

Dr. Lathrop holds dual Canadian and French citizenship.