

Podcast: 'Just the wife'—how sexism in science obscured achievements of four groundbreaking researchers

Biologist Kat Arney tells the stories of four researchers whose contributions to genetics were overlooked because of sexism in science during the 20th century.

<https://geneticliteracyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/010-Just-the-wife-Genetics-Unzipped.mp3>

Barbara McClintock, left, and Harriet Creighton
Barbara McClintock, left,
and Harriet Creighton. Cold
Spring Harbor Laboratory
Archives.

- [Esther Lederberg](#), whose work on phage Lambda paved the way for her husband Joshua's 1958 Nobel Prize. She was also the inventor of replica plating—a technique still used in microbiology labs all over the world today— yet struggled to get tenure and recognition for her work.
- [Harriet Creighton](#), the first graduate student of groundbreaking plant geneticist Barbara McClintock, who discovered how chromosomes cross over and switch sections of DNA when germ cells are made. Seeing how difficult it was for her mentor to get funding, Harriet left research in favor of a career as a university lecturer.
- [Tsuneko Okazaki](#), who discovered the eponymous 'Okazaki fragments'— short fragments produced when DNA is copied—together with her husband Reiji. While many said that it was a Nobel-worthy discovery, Reiji died in his 40s, and Tsuneko was never awarded the prize in her own right.
- [Martha Chase](#), whose famous 'blender experiment' with Alfred Hershey helped to prove that DNA carries the genetic information inside cells.

[Full transcript and show notes here.](#)

Genetics Unzipped is presented by award-winning science communicator [Kat Arney](#) and produced by [First Create the Media](#) for the UK [Genetics Society](#). Follow Kat on Twitter [@Kat_Arney](#) and Genetics Unzipped [@geneticsunzip](#)

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