ForeWord Reviews

SCIENCE

Lynn Margulis: The Life and Legacy of a Scientific Rebel
Dorion Sagan, editor
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Best known for her work on the origins of eukaryotic cells, symbiogenesis as a force in evolution, and the Gaia hypothesis, Lynn Margulis was a scientist whose lively spirit and frank opinions left behind an enduring legacy that's well worth remembering.

When she died after a stroke in 2011, obituaries emphasized her ability to turn complicated scientific concepts into mainstream discussions, and even after she married famous cosmologist Carl Sagan, her own star was just as bright.

In this thoughtful and expertly curated collection, Margulis's son and long-time collaborator, Dorion Sagan, calls her "indomitable Lynn." A fearless and zealous advocate of her theories who could also display a loving heart, he writes, "[H]er threat was not to people but to the evil done to the spirit by the entrenchment of unsupported views."

In other essays, Margulis's complex personality beguiles, frustrates, charms, and elevates various writers, resulting in a stunning portrait that no single remembrance could have captured. Luminaries throughout the scientific world share their memories of her bulldog attitude and scientific contributions, showing that although she's gone, her work definitely still resonates and informs evolutionary biology and other fields.

Jorge Wagensberg, a physicist and professor from the University of Barcelona, calls Margulis "biology's greatest heroine," while astrobiologist Penny Boston recalls the scientist's ability to be like an "earth mother" who was encouraging and friendly.

Other contributors share stories about traipsing with her through marshes on Cape Cod talking about biology, or calling Margulis in the middle of the night with sudden scientific insight (only to have her gently say, "Okay. Now go back to sleep"). There are several of her students who recall her tenacity and ferocious curiosity, two attributes that drove them toward deepening their own research.

The collection is organized chronologically, grouping together essays about her early days as a scientist and following with her establishment in the scientific community, her work as a "modern-day Copernicus," and her role as a teacher, neighbor, and friend. The photographs

included in the volume are also perfectly chosen, with every image showing her forceful personality, relentless focus, and often-captivating smile.

Taken as a whole, Sagan's collection is a fitting tribute to a woman whose life and legacy have touched so many others. As he notes, her indomitable spirit lives on through her children, grandchildren, colleagues, and students—and most of all, through the work that she championed so well.

Elizabeth Millard