

HEINRICH WIELAND PRIZE



LAUDATOR 2025 | PROFILE

Professor Richard Roberts, PhD
New England Biolabs, Ipswich, MA, USA

Sir Richard Roberts is a distinguished molecular biologist renowned for his groundbreaking discovery of split genes and mRNA splicing, a finding that revolutionized our understanding of gene expression. This seminal work earned him the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1993. In addition to being one of the first researchers to utilize computational biology for genetic studies, Sir Richard Roberts is also known for his pioneering research involving the identification, isolation, and characterization of hundreds of restriction enzymes. These enzymes have since become essential and irreplaceable tools in genetic engineering and molecular biology research worldwide.

Sir Richard Roberts completed his PhD in organic chemistry at the University of Sheffield, UK, in 1968. After postdoctoral research at Harvard University in Boston, USA, he joined Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (CSHL) in 1972 as senior staff investigator. He became Assistant Director for Research at CSHL in 1968. In 1992, he moved to New England Biolabs as Research Director and became the Chief Scientific Officer in 2005. He received numerous honours, most prominently the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. He is an elected Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Society of Microbiology, the Royal Society (FRS), and a member of the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO). He was knighted in 2008 for his services to science and continues to be an influential advocate for scientific research and education.

