

PREFACE

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Watson and Crick's publication of the structure of DNA which stands as one of the most significant events in the history of science. Since that time thousands of scientists have been investigating numerous aspects of the structure and function of DNA in order to understand how genetic information is contained within this molecule and how it is processed in such an incredibly ordered manner. The ultimate goals of these investigative efforts include the very basic human desire to understand the molecular processes of life and to determine the basis of the many genetic and viral diseases of man as the first step in their eradication. As a result of these efforts we now have a solid foundation of information in molecular genetics for future investigations. The development of recombinant DNA technology over the past five years has excited the imaginations of scientists because it offers a powerful methodology for unravelling the many genetic complexities of higher organisms and for the genetic engineering of microorganisms designed to produce useful products for the biomedical sciences and industry.

The international symposium on Genetic Engineering hosted by the Giovanni Lorenzini Foundation in March 1978 and sponsored by this Foundation and the World Health Organisation, Geneva, focused on some of the latest and most exciting research in this field. These topics ranged from basic and applied genetics to discussions of the establishment and comparison of guidelines thought to be necessary for conducting recombinant DNA research adopted by the various countries of the world engaged in this type of research. The presentations of that symposium are compiled in this volume. If the rate of progress toward our goals continues to accelerate as in the past few years, the next twenty-five years of genetic research should be gratifying to the investigative scientist and the society that supports these efforts.

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