



Clifford Tabin

Class of 1972

Following graduation from New Trier East High in 1972, **CLIFFORD TABIN** attended the University of Chicago where he did undergraduate work in Physics, and then MIT where he obtained his Ph.D. in Biology.

As a graduate student, he participated in the first cloning of genes responsible for causing cancer and determined the mutations that make them different from genes in normal cells. Starting his own laboratory at Massachusetts General Hospital, he was among the first to bring modern molecular tools to classical embryological systems, work he continued when he joined the faculty of the Department of Genetics at Harvard Medical School in 1989.

Focusing on how embryos get their organization and organs attain their proper shape and structure, his lab has worked on a range of problems, asking questions such as why an arm is different from a leg, or why the heart is on the left rather than the right side of the body. He has also examined how the process of forming an embryo is modified during evolution to produce the variety of life we see around us in nature, such as in the distinct shapes of beaks in different species of Darwin's Finches, the evolution of traits that allow blind fish to thrive in caves, and the generation of the physical differences that distinguish us from our ape cousins. In addition to his research, he heads an international effort to establish a medical school in Kathmandu geared toward training physicians to serve the needs of the rural poor of Nepal.

Tabin is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences, the Royal Society of London, and is the Chairman of the Department of Genetics at Harvard. At New Trier, he participated in sports and theater.

