

## **454 Life Sciences and Baylor College of Medicine complete sequencing of DNA pioneer**

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### **The genome of James Watson is the first to be sequenced for less than \$1M**

454 Life Sciences Corporation, in collaboration with scientists at the Human Genome Sequencing Center, Baylor College of Medicine, announced today in Houston, Texas, the completion of a project to sequence the genome of James D. Watson, Ph.D., co-discoverer of the double-helix structure of DNA. The mapping of Dr. Watson's genome was completed using the Genome Sequencer FLX™ system and marks the first individual genome to be sequenced for less than \$1 million.

“When we began the Human Genome Project, we anticipated it would take 15 years to sequence the 3 billion base pairs and identify all the genes,” said Richard Gibbs, Ph.D., director, Human Genome Sequencing Center, Baylor College of Medicine. “We completed it in 13 years in 2003 – coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the publication of the work of Watson and Dr. Francis Crick that described the double helix. Today, we give James Watson a DVD containing his personal genome – a project completed in only two months. It demonstrates how far sequencing technology has come in a short time.”

Christopher McLeod, president and CEO of 454 Life Sciences, added: “The sequencing of Dr. Watson's genome validates the approach taken by 454 Life Sciences in developing a technology to make the sequencing of individual human genomes quick and affordable. As we take another

step on the path toward the X-Prize and reducing the cost of human genome sequencing to \$10,000, we hope to enable a new era of medicine that is tailored to a patient's unique genetic profile.”

Michael Egholm, Ph.D., vice president of research and development of 454 Life Sciences, said: “The sequencing of Dr. Watson’s genome has been done on production Genome Sequencer FLX™ systems, where we could take advantage of the instrument’s high quality data and long read lengths. Using the unbiased 454 Sequencing™ technology, we obtained a near complete picture of Dr. Watson's genome and were able to identify missing pieces of the public reference genome generated by the Human Genome Project. By making his genome publicly available, Dr. Watson will provide a tremendous resource to researchers and future generations.”

Dr. Watson will receive a DVD with his genomic sequence. He will decide which of his data will be published.

“When I conceived the 454 Sequencing™ technology, I envisioned making routine individual genome sequencing a reality to help with personal medical care,” said Jonathan Rothberg, founder and former chairman of 454 Life Sciences. “Since Dr. Watson is the co-discoverer of DNA’s structure and 1962 Nobel Laureate, it is only appropriate to work with him on this ambitious genome sequencing project. This project will pave the way for exploring life at the ultimate level by uncovering what makes each individual unique.”

Source: Russo Partners, LLC

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