

- Thursday 17 March 2022 at 4:00pm - Susan Wessler, UC Riverside
(Chairman : Olivier Panaud)

Title : Transposable element-mediated Structural Variation: from McClintock to Pangenomes

Biography :

Susan Wessler is Distinguished Professor of Genetics and the Neil and Rochelle Campbell Chair for Innovation in Science Education at the University of California Riverside. In 2011 she was elected Home Secretary of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the first woman to hold this position in its 150-year history. She is a plant molecular geneticist known for her contributions to the field of transposon biology and plant genome evolution. A native of New York City, she received a Ph.D. in biochemistry from Cornell University (1980) and was a postdoctoral fellow at the Carnegie Institution of Washington (1980-1982). She began her career at the University of Georgia in 1983 where she remained until moving to UC Riverside in 2010. Wessler has contributed extensively to educational and diversity initiatives. As a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Professor (2006), she adapted her research program for the classroom by developing the Dynamic Genome (DG) Lab where incoming freshman can experience the excitement of scientific discovery. The DG course is currently taken by over 500 students/year. Since her election as NAS Home Secretary in 2011, she has spearheaded initiatives that have led to a doubling of the number of women Academy members. She is the recipient of several awards including the Stephen Hales Prize (2011) from the American Society of Plant Biologists, the Excellence in Science Award from FASEB (2012), the McClintock Prize for Plant Genetics and Genome Studies (2015) and the HudsonAlpha Life Sciences Prize (2019). She is a member of the National Academy of Sciences (1998), the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2007), the American Philosophical Society (2013), and a Foreign Member of the Royal Society (2017).