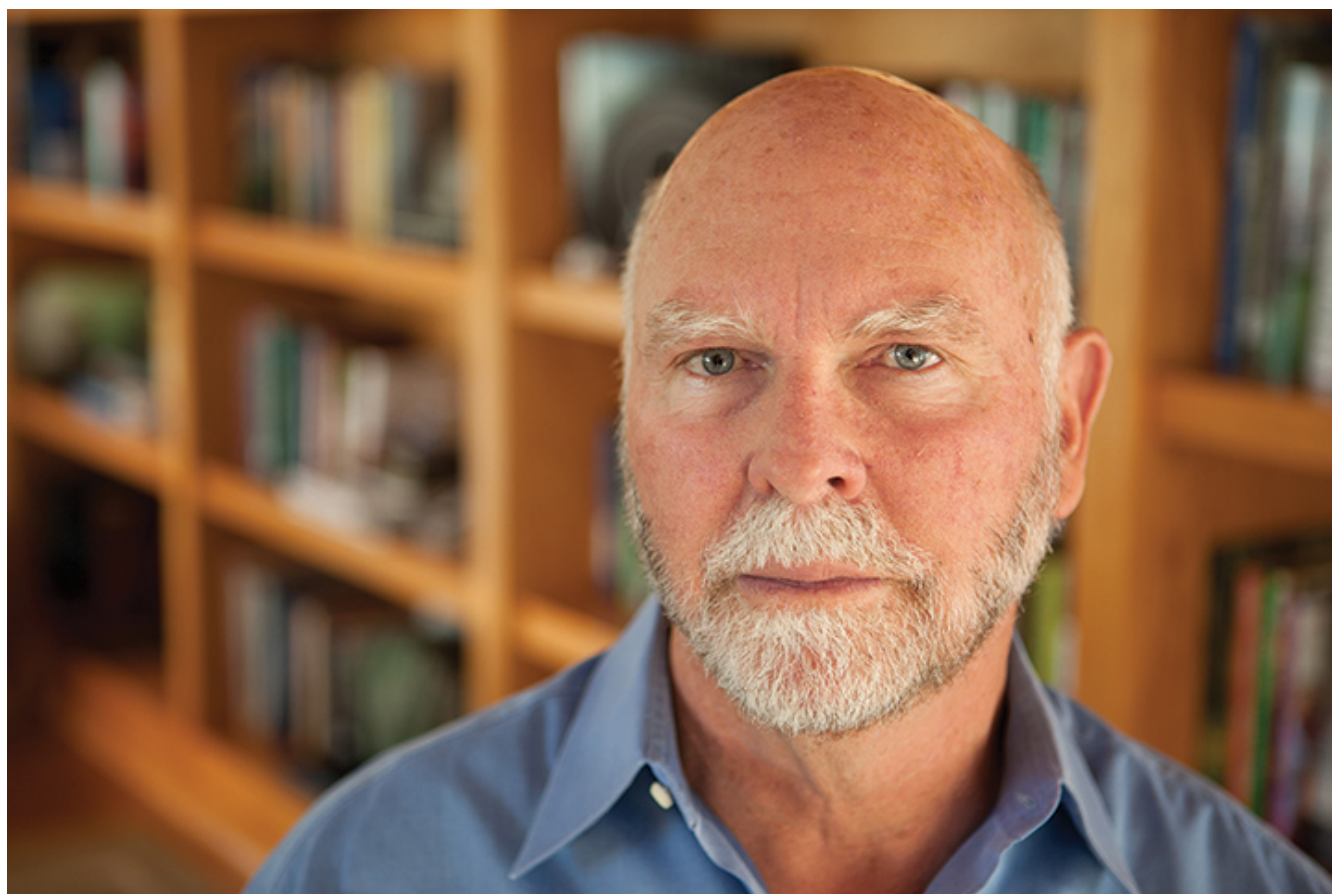


UC San Diego

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By Henry DeVries Oct 24, 2013

Alumnus J. Craig Venter to Speak at UC San Diego to Mark Release of Latest Book



J. Craig Venter

One of UC San Diego's best-known graduates, scientist and visionary J. Craig Venter has entered new frontiers with his series of scientific discoveries that hold the promise of unraveling the secrets to life and mankind's very existence.

Venter, who's been variously hailed as an entrepreneur, geneticist, synthetic biologist, iconoclast and irascible genius, returns to the university's campus Monday, Oct. 28, at Price Center East Ballroom, starting at 7 pm., to mark the release of his latest book, which examines the creation of life within synthetic genomics.

His conversation will be themed on “Life at the Speed of Life: From the Double Helix to the Dawn of Digital Life,” scheduled for release this month. A rare forum for public interaction with Venter, the event is free and open to the public; no tickets or reservations are required.

Moderator Roger Bingham, a renowned UC San Diego neurobiologist in his own right, will interview Venter for 50 minutes, followed by a 15-to-20 minute Q&A session. The session is presented by UCSD Extension as part of the on-going [Helen Edison Lecture Series](#).

Venter, who turns 67 this month, originally moved to San Diego from the Bay Area right after high school. An avid surfer and boater, he wanted to be close to warmer ocean waters.

“I was a horrible student,” he once said. “I really hated school. I wasn’t good at anything. I almost flunked out.”

From there, after he was drafted into the Navy, Venter’s life journey took him to Vietnam, where he contemplated suicide because of the atrocities he witnessed. Later, he discovered his life-changing scientific pursuit that turned his perspective from hopeless to providing hope and discovery into unlocking the genetic riddles of life itself.

After returning from Vietnam, he earned a bachelor’s of science degree in biochemistry and a Ph.D. in physiology and pharmacology from UC San Diego. Eventually, he wound up fulfilling his destiny as one of the world’s most renowned bio geneticists, led by his unraveling of genome sequencing and the creation of “synthetic life.”

In science-speak, this startling discovery holds the promise of having a profound impact on the very questions of human existence. In everyday language, Venter’s discoveries seek to answer the age-old, previously unfathomable question, “What is life?”

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