



Martin Chalfie

Biochemist

Martin Chalfie was born in Chicago. His parents worked in the garment industry, but they encouraged their three sons to pursue academic careers. Chalfie took an interest in the natural sciences, especially chemistry, and received a doctorate in biochemistry at Harvard. He did various short-term jobs before continuing studies for his doctorate. Later he conducted research in Cambridge, England, where he did his Nobel Prize-awarded work. Since 1982 he has served at Columbia University. He married Tulle Hazelrigg, and they have one daughter, Sarah.

Some organisms produce what has been named Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP), which emits a shimmering light. The formation of GFP is regulated by a gene that can be incorporated into the genomes of other organisms. Because GFP can be linked to other proteins thanks to genetic engineering, it has become an important tool for studying biological processes in cells. Martin Chalfie began to use GFP for this purpose in 1988. He inserted the GFP gene into the ringworm *C. elegans* and succeeded in coloring six individual cells that could then be tracked.

Dr. Chalfie's website <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/biology/faculty/chalfie/>

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