



## LEONARD HAYFLICK

London, UK | Thursday 29 November 2012  
For immediate release

**Best known for his pioneering research on the ageing process, Leonard Hayflick is an internationally recognised microbiologist whose work has revolutionised cell biology. Web of Stories presents a comprehensive and insightful video archive of the man behind the ‘Hayflick limit’.**

Gerontologist Leonard Hayflick (born 20 May 1928) is widely known for his research in cell biology and the ageing process. In 1961, he discovered that human cells have a limited capacity for replication before dying out, this was coined the ‘Hayflick limit’. He produced the first oral polio vaccine produced in a continuously propagated cell strain – work which contributed to significant virus vaccine development.

Hayflick obtained a PhD in his home state institution, the University of Pennsylvania, prior to embarking on an academic career which included professorships in Texas, Florida and California. He is an associate of many distinguished international scientific committees, and is a past winner of the Sandoz Prize for Gerontological Research. In 1979 he was awarded a major scientific research grant by the National Institute on Aging on the basis of his expertise in the field. Subsequently, in the 1990s, he authored *How and Why We Age*, a book which suggests that the scientific understanding of ageing has yet to be fully unravelled.

In these absorbing video clips, Hayflick recalls his early fascination with science: *‘I had some innate fascination with scientific things... I was enrolled in a course of first year chemistry, and I aggravated the teacher very much because in*

*several cases I tried to correct what he was saying.’*

Hayflick explains the process of the ‘Hayflick limit’, and reveals the origin of the term: *‘[There is] a period when the cells have stopped dividing, [which] people generally have called... the “Hayflick limit”’. The derivation occurred in the mid ‘60s by... Sir [Frank] Macfarlane Burnet, an Australian Nobel Prize laureate... who did a book in which he discussed ageing, and in that book he called what I had observed the “Hayflick limit”’.*

He also talks about the global distribution of vaccines as a result of his work on the WI-38 cell strain: *‘The [World Health Organisation] funded me to establish another bank of cells in Moscow, for distribution among Iron Curtain countries. Several countries wanted their own strain for purposes of national pride, which is understandable, of course. They’re very easy to make, following my recipe. [WI-38] is used even to this day’.*

This in-depth new footage of Hayflick can be watched as a number of short video clips. All Web of Stories videos are easy to share with friends and colleagues, and may be embedded into personal blogs and websites.  
<http://www.webofstories.com/people/leonard.hayflick/1>

## NOTES FOR EDITORS ABOUT WEB OF STORIES

Everyone has a story to tell. Over time many stories become forgotten, but now Web of Stories offers members of the public the chance to tell their stories for future generations to enjoy. The project is built on the belief that we all have wonderful stories to share, and have family and friends whose tales we would like to hear.

Web of Stories began as an archive of life stories told by some of the great scientists, writers and artists of our time. As the number of stories grew, it became obvious that some were on related topics and that a web was slowly being created of connected stories.

We welcome anyone to come and talk about virtually anything they like. Just like our famous speakers, we hope you will record your stories for others to enjoy.

## CONTACT

For more information on Web of Stories or any of our videos please contact the Press Desk on +44(0)20 7323 0323 or [press@webofstories.com](mailto:press@webofstories.com)

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