



FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF SCIENCE

THOMAS R. CECH

Thomas R. Cech is a Nobel Prize-winning chemist, former president of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and distinguished professor and director of the Biofrontiers Institute at the University of Colorado. After earning his undergraduate degree at Grinnell College and his PhD from the University of California–Berkeley, he did postdoctoral research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and then joined the faculty of the University of Colorado–Boulder. In 1982 Cech and his research group discovered self-splicing RNA in *Tetrahymena*, providing the first exception to the long-held belief that biological reactions are always catalyzed by proteins. Cech became a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator in 1988 and distinguished professor of chemistry and biochemistry in 1990. From 2000 to 2009, he served as president of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the largest private biomedical research organization in the US. He has now returned to full-time research and teaching at the University of Colorado–Boulder. Cech’s work has been recognized by many national and international awards and prizes in addition to the Nobel Prize, including the Heineken Prize of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences, the Albert Lasker Basic Medical Research Award, the National Medal of Science, and election to the US National Academy of Sciences.