Martha Cowles Chase Encyclopedia Article

Martha Cowles Chase

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1927-

American scientist who, with Alfred Hershey (1908–) made important discoveries about the nature of DNA, paving the way for modern molecular biology. In 1952 Chase and Hershey proved that viral DNA, not the protein capsule (called the capsid) that surrounds it, carries the genetic code in all living things. Their discovery spurred more research in the field, and was followed one year later by Watson and Crick's discovery of the double-helix structure of DNA.