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# The University of Georgia

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Public Affairs

*News Service*

*News Release*

Tuesday, October 13, 2009

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## **First Ljungdahl Lecture to be held on UGA campus Oct. 23**

Athens, Ga. – Steven W. Ragsdale, professor of biological chemistry at the University of Michigan, will deliver the inaugural Lars G. Ljungdahl Lecture on Friday, Oct. 23, at 3:30 p.m. in room C127 of the Davison Life Sciences Complex.

The event, named in honor of a long-time UGA faculty member, is being hosted by the department of biochemistry and molecular biology at UGA, part of the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences. It is open and free to the public.

Ragsdale is a UGA alumnus and former graduate student of Ljungdahl. The title of his lecture is “Nickel, the Carbon Cycle and the Wood-Ljungdahl Pathway.”

Funding for the lecture series was provided by Ljungdahl and his wife, Despy Karlas, who was a professor of piano and noted performer for decades with what is now the Hugh Hodgson School of Music at UGA.

Ragsdale’s laboratory studies the microbial processes that are important in environmental biology and biological energy conversion, such as the microbial metabolism of greenhouse and energy-rich gases like carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and methane. Other projects aim at generating enzyme-linked fuel cells and engineering organisms for biofuel and chemical production. Ragsdale was elected in 2006 as a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology.

Ljungdahl came to UGA in 1967 and immediately began building a reputation as an outstanding research scientist and teacher. As Georgia Power Distinguished Professor of Biotechnology, he received numerous honors, including fellowships in the American Academy of Microbiology, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences. He worked with the Georgia Research Alliance for 10 years and at the same time served as member of the State of Georgia Governor’s Advisory Council on Science and Technology from 1992-1996.

Ljungdahl was editor-in-chief for the journal *Applied and Environmental Microbiology* from 1986 through 1995 and director of the Georgia Biotechnology Center from 1994 to 2001. He also served as director of the Center for Biological Resource Recovery.

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After earning a diploma from Stockholm City Technical School, he began work full time at the Karolinska Institute as a technician and at same time pursued studies toward a chemical engineering degree, which he obtained from Stockholm Technical Institute in 1945.

He worked as a research chemist at the Stockholm Brewery Company from 1947-58, and then came to Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, where he finished his doctoral degree in 1964. At Case, he worked with Harland Wood, one of America's most honored biochemists and co-discoverer with Ljungdahl of the Wood-Ljungdahl Pathway, which involves carbon dioxide fixation and acetate synthesis.

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