

MOVING? Please update us with your new information by calling our toll-free number 1-800-URA-TWIN or visiting our website at www.matr.vcu.edu.

It's double the giggles and double the grins... And double the trouble if you're blessed with twins.



There are two things in life for which we are never truly prepared: twins. —Josh Billings

Quotes

KIDS CORNER!

Below is a word-find puzzle that is a fun way to introduce young twins to science concepts, such as genes, heredity and zygosity.

N	T	P	E	J	T	L	G	K	R	L	R	Y	E	Y
V	Z	G	N	P	Z	T	M	E	A	R	T	T	L	M
K	U	V	I	H	K	S	I	O	N	I	X	I	P	B
Q	B	G	R	U	P	A	I	E	O	E	S	Y	T	C
T	U	H	N	G	S	E	G	T	Z	D	Y	K	U	T
S	W	C	N	L	A	N	R	E	T	A	R	F	C	Y
X	X	V	T	L	D	H	G	R	U	H	Y	B	F	Y
K	M	R	S	Z	M	Q	D	Z	D	Z	Y	I	A	U
B	J	I	J	E	V	M	F	H	Y	T	S	G	Y	U
X	M	D	X	S	O	H	L	T	U	U	M	T	P	H
M	T	P	Q	T	V	C	U	V	A	U	C	L	M	S
H	E	P	K	E	S	T	L	K	E	H	P	E	H	E

DNA
ENVIRONMENT
FRATERNAL
GENES
HEREDITY
IDENTICAL
MULTIPLE
RESEARCH
STUDY
ZYGOSITY

V i r g i n i a C o m m o n w e a l t h U n i v e r s i t y



VCU



A Family Newsletter from the Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry Volume XIX

Twin Matters

 MID-ATLANTIC *twin* REGISTRY

<http://www.matr.vcu.edu>
1-800-URA-TWIN (872-8946)
PO Box 980617, Richmond VA 23298
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Twin Matters

A Family Newsletter from the Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry Volume XIV

A Message From the Directors

Dear Twins:

Greetings from the MATR! We hope you enjoyed your summer and would like to take this opportunity to say hello and to provide you with a few updates on our progress.

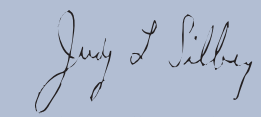
Recently the MATR was placed under the Office of Research here at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), headed by Dr. Francis Macrina, Vice President for Research. It has been an exciting time for us and we look forward to a bright future.

As always, we are busy with several ongoing studies. Some of our twins are traveling to other states to take part in these studies. Now that's dedication!

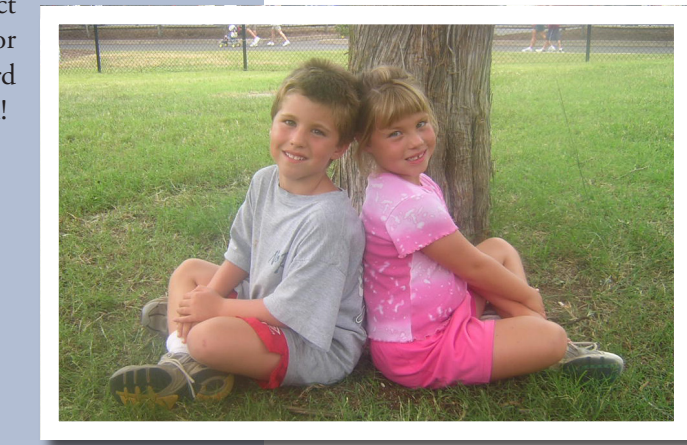
We at the MATR would like to extend our sincerest gratitude for the time you have given to our studies. Your participation with us continues to contribute to the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of many common diseases and conditions, which will be priceless for generations to come.

Please feel free to contact us with your comments or concerns. We look forward to speaking with you soon!

Gratefully Yours,


Judy L. Silberg, PhD
MATR Scientific Director


Emily C. Hill
MATR Project Coordinator



 MID-ATLANTIC *twin* REGISTRY

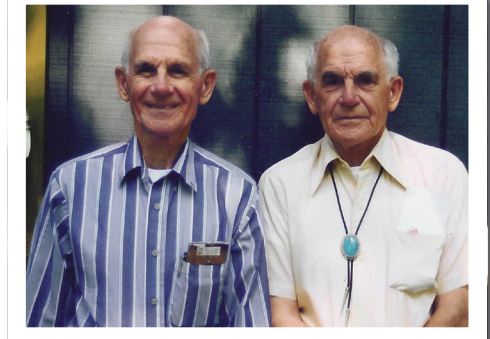
CURRENT STUDIES

The following summaries contain information about some of our current studies. If you think you might qualify and would like to know more, please call us at 1-800-URA-TWIN for more information. If you have already participated with us, then we thank you for your time!

SLEEP STUDY: Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia are studying a phenomenon known as “sleep homeostasis,” which is basically the drive to fall asleep. They are looking for fraternal same-sex twin pairs to complete a series of tests, including an overnight stay in their sleep center.

POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME: We are currently starting the second phase of a study on Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), conducted by researchers at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and Duke University. The researchers are interested in learning more about this syndrome, and they hope that the data they collect will help women with this condition. If you are interested in learning more about the study you may visit the study website at <http://www.niehsnpcos.org>.

FACTORS IN HUMAN AGING: Conducted by Dr. Colleen Jackson-Cook of Virginia Commonwealth University, this study collects DNA from willing twins to look for factors in the DNA which effect human aging. In order to do so, they will invite same-sex twins ranging from 6 to 80 years of age to provide their DNA. The DNA will be compared to determine how changes in the DNA impact aging.



- In this Issue:*
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 - Science Corner

VCU
V i r g i n i a C o m m o n w e a l t h U n i v e r s i t y

TWIN HUMOR

Seeing Double: The Case of “Mistaken” Identity...

When my twin daughters, Lindi and Libby were 11, they were local beauty queens, which required appearances in parades and showcases. This was the only time I made them dress alike. One day they were in a Christmas parade and were dressed in their matching queenly attire. Afterwards we decided to take my mother to the mall. When we got to the mall we separated with Lindi going with Mom and Libbi going with me. When it was time to leave I asked Libbi to go look for Mom and Lindi. She scurried back after about 10 minutes and I asked her if she found them. She replied ‘No’ she had not found them and said that she was more embarrassed than she had ever been before. I asked her to explain and she said that she had looked in a couple of stores and then remembered that Lindi had said she wanted Pizza. She went to the entrance of the pizza parlor and spied Lindi at the back. She waved & Lindi waved back. She motioned for Lindi to come out and Lindi motioned back. It was at that point that she realized that the pizza parlor had a mirror covering the wall in the back and she had been looking at herself!

TWINS AT PLAY

Twins really do “Have more fun!”

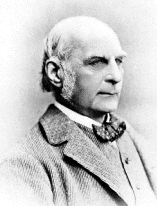
This picture was taken when my twin sister, Karen, and I vacationed in Kure Beach, NC with Karen’s 15 year old twin daughters, Jessie and Jennie. The four of us enjoyed it so much we are now planning our next vacation together!

Our family has proven that twins don’t always skip a generation, like most people think. My grandmother had twins, my mother had twins and my twin sister had twins. I also had two children, but not twins. Think one of the teenage twins in this picture will be having twins too??? We’ve warned them both!!!

I’m thankful to be a twin. Twins are indeed “Special”!
- Sharon Ashmore



SCIENCE CORNER

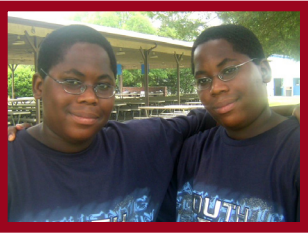


Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) was born in England and involved in many aspects of science and culture. He was an anthropologist, explorer, inventor, meteorologist, geographer, statistician and geneticist, just to name a few!

Galton, who was the half-cousin of Charles Darwin, was one of the first to implement questionnaires and surveys to collect scientific data. He also used statistics to conduct research on heredity—this method is now called the “biometric approach.” Galton was one of the first to use the term “nature vs. nurture” in regards to human genetics. He eventually turned his research to twins in an attempt to answer questions about heredity and the environment. Galton wanted to see if twins who were born alike would become less alike in different environments. He used questionnaires to collect data to write “The History of Twins” in 1875 which was an early version of behavioral genetics.

TWINS AND THE LAW

Parents of twins in many states, such as Kathy Dolan of New York, have started grassroots efforts to encourage state lawmakers to establish legislature that supports the rights of parents of twins and other multiples to have a say in whether or not their twins/multiples should be separated when entering school. Many school systems have blanket policies that require the separation of twins/multiples when entering school, and these policies often don’t



seem to allow for a case-by-case review to determine the best outcome for the classroom placement of twins/multiples. This lack of cooperation was what led Wendy Haavisto of Minnesota to spearhead efforts to get a law enacted that would support the parents’ rights as primary decision makers in determining if their multiples should be assigned to separate classrooms. The (continued on the bottom of next page)

The **MATR** (Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry) values its participants greatly and strives to interact with our community with consideration and respect. We have the same expectations for researchers that interact with our twins. If at any time you have concerns regarding your experiences with MATR staff or research staff for any study, please do not hesitate to call 1-800-URA-TWIN (800-872-8946) or call the Participant Coordinator for the MATR, Carol Williams, at 804-828-8116 and we will address your concern immediately.

Future Newsletters: **What would you like to know?**

If there is a topic you would like to learn about just let us know and we will try to include in an upcoming newsletter!

Do you know twins who want to register with us?

If so, please ask them to visit our website at www.matr.vcu.edu so they can join thousands of twins who are willing to consider participating in health-related research.

TWIN PHOTOS AND STORIES

We want to thank everyone who has sent in their photos or stories in the past! Please continue to send in your twin photographs or stories about experiences you and your twin have had. Once we receive them we’ll ask you to sign a permission form that allows us to use them. If so, your picture and/or story could show up in upcoming newsletters, or even on our website! We know our twins enjoy learning about other twins’ experiences, so be sure to fill us in!

SCHOOL PLACEMENT

Due to the current renewed interest regarding twin/multiple placement in classrooms, we thought it was worth reprinting an article that has been part of the MATR newsletter in the past. We have added a few additional online resources as well.



There are a lot of points to consider when discussing this issue with teachers and other school officials. We have compiled a list of pros and cons to help make the decision easier. It is important to remember that no decision is irre-

versible. Parents and school officials should be flexible in determining what is best for your children. Classroom placement should be reviewed yearly. Also, your twins can be the best resource as to whether they want to stay together or be apart.

- Pros of keeping twins together:
- Multiples get a sense of security and comfort from one another
 - Most twins work well together (One twin can help her/his co-twin excel in the skills that s/he may lack)
 - Keeps parents’ lives simpler by having only one teacher and one set of homework (cuts down on teacher comparisons)
 - Twins can learn independence through working in separate groups and socializing with others in the classroom
 - Teachers are more likely to understand how the children operate as multiples (twins teach the teacher about the special bond of multiples)
 - Avoids the stress that would be put on twins if they were to be separated against their will. Stress could cause problems socially and academically.

- Cons of keeping twins together:
- If one twin is more academically advanced than her/his co-twin, then separation may be the best option
 - Teachers are likely to confuse the identities of the twins, possibly upsetting the twins
 - Twins are more likely to be compared by the teacher and other students
 - Twins may not be able to operate as individuals within the classroom
 - Some twins may demonstrate disruptive behavior if placed together
 - Twins may compete with one another, so that their main goal is to keep up with or beat their co-twin
 - If they are closely dependent, they may have problems socializing with other children in the classroom
 - There may be lack of privacy if one twin reports on the progress and activities of the other to parents

Resources:

1. “Raising Twins: From Birth Through Adolescence” by Eileen Pearlman, PhD, and Jill Ganon
2. “The Art Of Parenting Twins” by Patricia Malmstrom and Janet Poland
3. Latrobe Twins Study, “Twins In School” produced by Australian Multiple Birth Association
4. (limited availability on line at <http://www.amba.org.au/>)
5. National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc (NOMOTC) www.nomotc.org
6. Clearinghouse on Early Education & Parenting (CEEP) <http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/poptopics/twins.html>

FAMOUS TWINS

Most people have heard of twins such as Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen or Jenna and Barbara Bush, but there are a lot of other famous twins out there! Here are some twin pairs who have made it big:

Tia and Tamera Mowry were stars of the sit-com, “Sister-Sister” and movies like Twitches and Seventeen Again.

James and Oliver Phelps play Fred and George Weasley in the Harry Potter movies. James plays Fred and Oliver plays George.



Dylan and Cole Sprouse currently star in “The Suite Life of Zack and Cody” and have appeared in movies like Big Daddy and The Master of Disguise.

Benji and Joel Madden play in the band Good Charlotte.

Shawn and Aaron Ashmore are actors, Shawn plays Iceman in the X-Men movies and Aaron has appeared on TV shows such as “Veronica Mars” and “Smallville.”

That was just a few examples of twins where both decided to go into acting or singing, but not all twins make the same choices! Here are some celebrities with twins not in the business!



- Supermodel Giselle Bündchen has a twin sister Patricia.
- American Idol finalist Bucky Covington has a twin brother Rocky.
- Jon Heder, who played Napoleon Dynamite, has a twin brother Daniel

Kiefer Sutherland from “24” has a twin sister Rachel.

Elvis Presley had a twin brother, Jesse Garon, who died 35 minutes before Elvis was delivered.

ATTENTION TWINS: EMAIL ADDRESSES NEEDED!

We are collecting email addresses in an effort to start conducting web-based surveys and hope you would like to take part of this exciting process. If so please call us at 1-800-URA-TWIN or visit our website at www.matr.vcu.edu and drop us a line. We will not share your email with anyone else and you can ask to be removed at any time.

(- Twins and the Law continued) successful enactment in 2005 of the Minnesota Twin Law has motivated others to do the same in their states. Texas and Georgia have just recently passed similar legislature in 2007. Currently, states like New York, New Jersey, and South Carolina (to name a few) have bills that are sponsored and currently going through the legislative process to determine if they will be passed as laws. If you’d like to learn more about your state’s status regarding twin legislature as well as view research regarding the impact of classroom separation on twins and other multiples, a useful source of information is www.twinslaw.com. Remember, if you have questions regarding your locality’s policy on classroom placement of twins and other multiples, be sure to contact your district’s school board.