

EICHLER BRINGS GENOME HOT SPOT STUDIES TO WASHINGTON

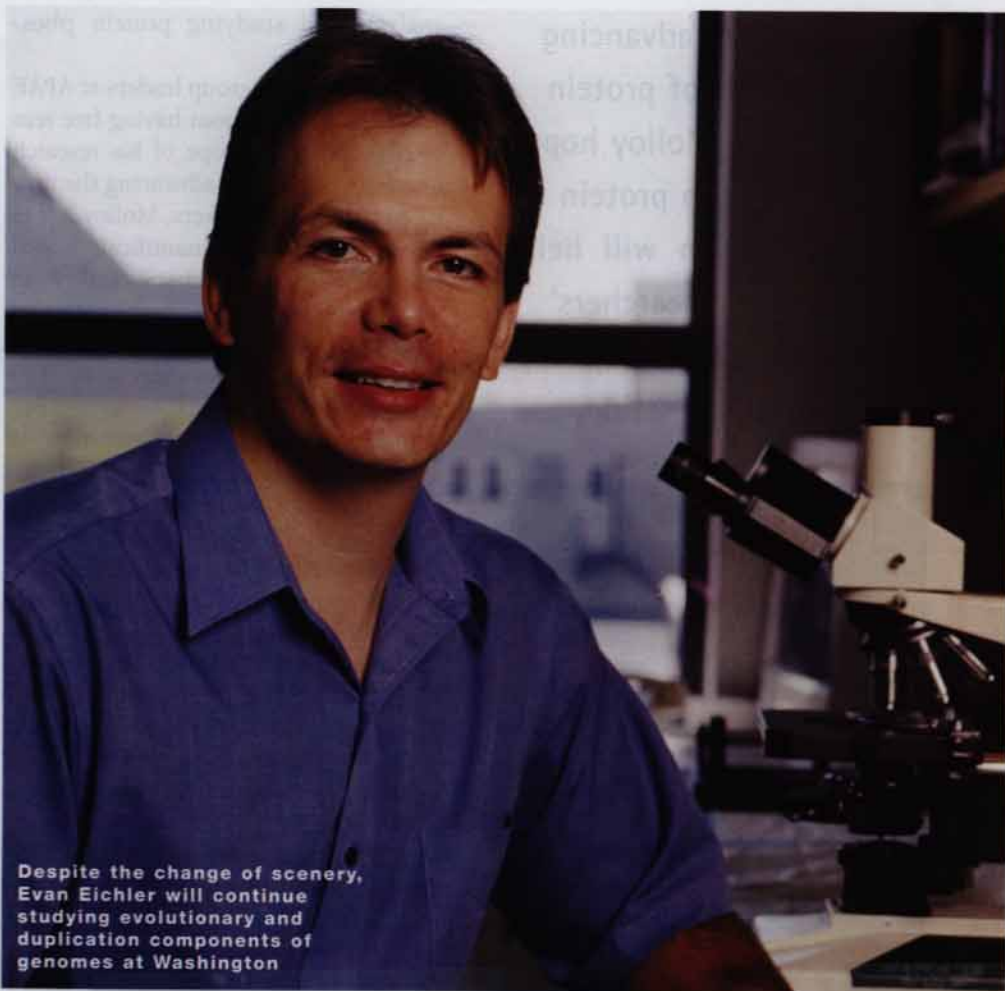
Evan Eichler was lured to the genome sciences department at the University of Washington by the same factor that originally brought him to Case Western Reserve University in the fall of 1997: its people.

Such names as **Hunt Willard** and **Aravinda Chakravarti** served to draw Eichler, a budding genomicist who would become well known through the field as a pioneer in the study of rapidly evolving portions of the genome — particularly duplicated sequence — to Case. In the past few years many of Eichler's colleagues there have gone on to other institutions, and while Eichler calls Case a "great envi-

ronment to start out in," he eventually realized that he was "trying to find that magic again."

His new post, as a tenured associate professor at Washington, feels that it has that promise, Eichler says. "There's a lot of depth and breadth to the genome community here," he says of the department chaired by **Bob Waterston** and populated with such names as **Maynard Olson**, **Deirdre Meldrum**, and **Phil Green**.

Which is why Eichler packed up in May and drove out West with six of his lab members (three more would follow later). He and his team are diving into studying the structures of genomes to find evolu-



Despite the change of scenery, Evan Eichler will continue studying evolutionary and duplication components of genomes at Washington

Wenpei Su is the first director of genomics applications at gene regulation company **CeMines**. Su comes from **Dow Chemical**, where he studied therapeutic proteins, and before that, he was a project leader at **Torrey Mesa Research Institute** working with gene-profiling and proteomic technologies.

A couple of departures from **Sequenom**: **Jay Lichter**, executive vice president of business development, and **Pete De Spain**, manager of corporate communications, left the company. De Spain is now at **Anadys Pharmaceuticals**.

Computational modeling firm **Entelos** appointed **Charles Sholtz** to be VP of legal affairs and intellectual property.

CytRx hired **Matthew Natalizio** as CFO, replacing **Kirk Peacock**, and **Jack Barber** as senior VP of drug development. Barber previously worked at **Immusol** and **Viagene**. Meantime, **Benjamin Levin** is the company's new general counsel and vice president of legal affairs.

Leslie Brown, previously chief operating officer at **Iconix Pharmaceuticals**, joins **Pharmacopeia Drug Discovery** as president and CEO. Prior to Iconix, Brown served as COO at **GeneTrace**, a functional genomics firm.

Serologicals chose **Robert Brown**, formerly of **Andrx** and **Bristol-Myers Squibb**, to be its VP for corporate development.

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tionary components. "We're up to our eyeballs in chimp genome sequence, and we'll be looking at the macaque sequence," he says.

A key theory he's studying is the idea that the evolutionary hot spots he's already identified — places where duplications arise faster or regions are deleted faster than most of the genome — could explain conditions such as mental retardation, which he says hasn't been understood yet through more traditional linkage disequilibrium studies using SNPs, for example. His lab is working with external groups to collect patient samples and is "also trying to

develop computational methods to detect duplications" in genome sequences, Eichler says. His work will also benefit, he predicts, from collaborations with the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, where Eichler has an adjunct faculty appointment.

In the few months since he took his new position, Eichler says he's received more postdoc applications than he did in six and a half straight years at Case. "People want to live out West. Cleveland unfortunately wasn't a beacon on the hill for people to live at," he says. The level of interest is a great perk, Eichler says, but it won't change the

size of his lab, which he envisions keeping around 12 to 15 people. "That way I can still be involved and not have to have a lot of hierarchy in the group," he adds.

Beyond his own lab, Eichler's excited about the dynamics of his new home. The department still has five or six slots to fill, he says, and in about a year and a half the genome sciences team will be moving to a brand new facility along with the bioengineering department. "There's so much excitement here," Eichler says. "There's so much energy."

— Meredith Salisbury