SFI@30

A VIEW OF SFI'S FOUNDATIONS & FRONTIERS

MINESH BACRANIA PHOTOGRAPHY

On the Institute's 30th anniversary, even as we imagine tomorrow's intellectual frontiers, we take a moment to recount the three decades that saw SFI's birth and its development as the world center for complex systems research. The seven essays in this issue of the *Bulletin* present brief, personal stories about several deeply transdisciplinary topics that our founders and their colleagues grappled with during the Institute's first decade and since.

These (and the many other important SFI scientific themes not covered here) serve to demonstrate SFI's unique role and important contributions to the scientific landscape. With the early programs in complexity economics and adaptive computation, for example, the Institute quickly established itself as *the* incubator for science that challenges conventional wisdom and addresses previously unasked questions – questions that normally fall into the cracks between traditional research disciplines.

SFI also quickly became the "go to" place for bringing novel quantitative approaches to bear on existing questions, as we see in the essays about research on the origins of life, scaling theory, and human history. And, given the backdrop of emergence as a core organizing concept, SFI established itself as a place to pursue the broadest cross-cutting themes by asking what, if anything, all complex systems have in common.

Today, SFI continues to cast a wide net while diving deep. It does this by building on its early foundations of asking big questions, ignoring boundaries, applying computational and analytical approaches, and developing and testing quantitative theory. This is the spirit of inquiry that we, the inheritors of this grand intellectual experiment, are grateful to continue and expand on for the next 30 years and beyond.

Jennifer Dunne
Professor
Vice President for Science
Santa Fe Institute