

Maurice Wilkins

Maurice Hugh Frederick Wilkins CBE, FRS 1916–2004

Awarded the Nobel Prize (jointly) in Physiology or Medicine 1962

- Biophysicist and true hero of science
- A research assistant at Birmingham, he obtained a PhD in Physics in 1940
- He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1959 and received a CBE in 1962
- He was awarded a DSc in Physics from Birmingham in 1992

Known for his contribution to the discovery of the structure of DNA, Maurice Wilkins –

- Received the Nobel Prize for his work in the discovery of the structure of DNA and its importance in transferring information in living material
- Used his studies in the luminescence of solids and the theory of phosphorescence (at Birmingham) to help the war effort, particularly with the improvement of cathode-ray tube screens for radar
- Worked on uranium isotopes, which led him to California where he worked on the Manhattan Project on the development of the atomic bomb

While Francis Crick and James Watson, who are also Nobel Laureates, are more famously associated with the discovery of DNA, it was Maurice Wilkins's X-ray diffraction studies that led the four scientists (including Rosalind Franklin) to derive the molecular structure.