Biotech's Past, Present and Future

A glimpse at companies, products, key figures and other milestones in the rise of the modern biotech industry

Sources: LifeSciencesFoundation.org, MM&M research

1953

Watson and Crick map the molecular structure of DNA the double helix



1973

The era of genetic engineering: Boyer and Cohen (pictured) express recombinant genes in bacteria



1976

Genentech Inc., founded by Robert Swanson and Herbert Boyer, gives birth to the biotech industry



1980

President Carter signs the Bayh-Dole act, allowing academia to retain IP rights



1982

The first bioengineered drug, Eli Lilly's Humulin, reaches market. It was developed by Genentech



1986

Congress passes the Technology Transfer Act, which fosters partnerships between NIH and the private sector



1989

The first biotech blockbuster: Amgen launches Epogen, a recombinant version of erythropoietin for treating anemia



1998

Genentech debuts Herceptin for HER2+ breast cancer, a big step toward personalized medicine



2003

The Human Genome Project comes to a close, after 13 years; the genomic sequence was published in 2001



2011

Genzyme is acquired by Sanofi for \$20.1 billion, leaving Amgen the biggest standalone biotech



2013

The Supreme Court (AMP v. Myriad Genetics) rules that naturally occurring genes are not patentable



2015

When Remicade's EU patents expire in two years, it could trigger a biosimilars wave in oncology too

