

David Ogilvie White

Medical virologist

30 August 1931 – 7 November 2004

Professor Emeritus David Ogilvie White was one of Australia's most distinguished medical virologists. He was Professor of Microbiology, University of Melbourne, 1967-1994 and was Head of the Department of Microbiology for 14 of those years. He also filled other high-level appointments in the University, including Assistant Dean of Medicine (Preclinical) 1971-82; Dean of Research and Graduate Studies 1974-75; Chairman, Academic Board 1977-1978; and Pro-Vice-Chancellor 1975-78.

David was born in Canberra, the son of Harold White and Elizabeth Wilson, and he was educated at Canberra High School. During his early years there were signs of the eclectic brilliance that characterised his life. As a teenager, he was Canberra Open Chess Champion, and he co-authored a significant work on the birds of Canberra and district, presaging his lifelong interest in ornithology.

David graduated in medicine from the University of Sydney in 1954 and completed a PhD in virology at the Australian National University. For his PhD, he devised new ways to work with influenza virus in the laboratory, and this virus became the central focus of the research he did throughout his life. He made major contributions to elucidating the molecular biology and immunology of the virus.

David was an outstanding teacher of undergraduate students; this was recognised separately by the University of Melbourne and by the Australian Society for Microbiology, each of which named an annual excellence in teaching award in his honour. David's ability as a mentor for research students and staff was also

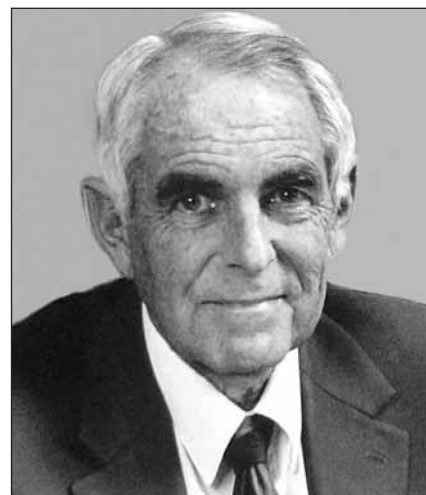
*Michael Studdert
Roy Robins-Browne
Alison White*

exemplary. He supervised 37 BSc Honours and 20 PhD students and attracted a series of outstanding postdoctoral fellows and visitors to his laboratory and, with them, published more than 100 original research papers.

David authored six major books on virology, including co-authorship with Frank Fenner of *Medical Virology* through four editions, each of which was widely used in medical schools around the world and was variously translated into Spanish, German, Japanese, Chinese and Russian.

With Frank Fenner and veterinary colleagues, he co-authored two editions of *Veterinary Virology*, which, in an international review, was recommended as "the text of choice for the teaching of veterinary virology". He was an editor of the international journal, *Archives of Virology*, and served on the editorial boards of several other international journals.

David received many accolades and honours, including an Officer of the Order of Australia (1992); honorary life membership of the Australian Society for Microbiology (1992); an honorary MD (Melbourne, 1994); the Ivanovsky Medal, Russian Academy of Medical Sciences (1996); honorary life membership of the Australasian Society for Immunology (1996).



David held executive positions on many national and international professional societies, including Foundation President of the Cell Biology Society of Australia (1962-64); President of the Microbiology and Immunology Section of ANZAAS (1971); Chairman of the Organising Committee of the International Conference on Viral Diseases in SE Asia and Western Pacific (1982); member of the Advisory Council, Virology Division, International Union of Microbiological Societies (1984-90); Chairman, Australian Academy of Science National Committee for Microbiology (1988-93); President, Australian Society for Microbiology (1988-90); and Deputy Chair, International Congress of Virology (1999). David was a foundation member of the Commonwealth AIDS Research Grants Committee and served on the committee of the National Centre for HIV Virology Research, Macfarlane Burnet Centre.

David's contributions to the ASM were immense and he was made an honorary life member of the Society in 1992. He was Chairman, Victorian Branch in 1964, President of the Society from 1988-90, a member of the Federal Council, 1962-65 and 1987-91, and a member of the

Executive from 1987-91. As President of the Society, David oversaw the establishment of the National Office, a crucial step in our Society's development. He was also instrumental in the establishment of the Society's Frank Fenner Research Award and the Distinguished Teaching Award (subsequently renamed the David White Excellence in Teaching Award) and chaired the committees responsible for making these awards from 1989 to 1990. David also chaired the Editorial Advisory Panel for the *History of Microbiology in Australia* and was the Rubbo Orator in 1993.

Throughout his life David retained an active interest in ornithology, exploration and wilderness, and was a life member of the Bird Observers Club of Australia. He enjoyed sport and was a keen tennis player. He was a Grand Master in the Australian Bridge Federation, several times Victorian bridge champion, and an Australian pairs champion.

David retired for medical reasons in 1994, and died peacefully after an 11 year battle with a rare liver disease.

Despite his extraordinary achievements, David was a remarkably humble and self-effacing person. Throughout his professional life, he voluntarily took on an enormous workload, not for self-aggrandisement or personal gain, but in the firm belief that he could make a difference. In this regard, as with most things, he was almost always right. Most of all, those who were privileged to know him will remember his warm, constant and lively friendship.

He is survived by his wife Marjorie, daughters Alison, Merran and Rosalind, and their families, including two grandchildren, and by siblings Judith, Katharine and John.

Michael Studdert and Roy Robins-Browne were colleagues of David at the University of Melbourne, and Alison White is David's eldest daughter.



ASM 2005
Australian Society for Microbiology
2005 Annual Conference
25-29 September 2005
National Convention Centre Canberra ACT
www.asm2005.org

Invitation to ASM 2005, Canberra

The Local Organising Committee invites all members to experience something very special at ASM 2005, Canberra. The LOC are working with the National Scientific Advisory Committee to produce another superb Conference Program for you, with Plenaries, Symposia, Preferred Papers and Workshops. Here is an excellent opportunity to meet old friends and colleagues, network with many scientists and, most of all, enjoy a little of our National Capital.

George McLean, Chair LOC ASM 2005

Scientific Program

With the symposia program being fully compiled by the National Scientific Advisory Committee (NSAC), all interests across all four Divisions, including SIGs, of the ASM will be catered for.

Refer to insert.

Other key ASM sessions include:

- Rubbo Oration Dr Lee Hood President, Institute for Systems Biology, Seattle, Washington USA
- Bazeley Oration (sponsored by CSL Ltd) Dr John B Robbins, Head of Laboratory of Developmental and Molecular Immunity, National Institute of Child Health & Human Development (NICHD), Bethesda, Maryland USA.
- Student BD Awards sponsored by BD – Contact your State branch for submission criteria and deadlines

International Speakers include:

- Professor Margaret Hammmerschlag, Director, Division of Paediatric Infectious Diseases, SUNY Downstate Medical Centre, New York, USA
- Professor Mark Chee, Genomics Illumina, San Diego CA, USA
- Professor James Staley, University of Washington, USA
- Dr Phillipe Sansonetti, Institut Pasteur, Paris, France
- Professor Michael Danson, Centre for Extremophile Research, Department of Biology & Biochemistry University of Bath, UK
- Professor Alex van Belkum, Erasmus University Medical Centre, Department of Microbiology & infectious Diseases, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- Professor Chris Whitfield, Canada Research Chair in Molecular Microbiology, University of Guelph, Ontario Canada
- Professor Sun Wen Chou, Veterans Affairs Medical Centre, Southwest US Veterans Hospital, Boston MA
- Dr Gaby Pfyffer, Department of Medical Microbiology, Institut für Medizinische Mikrobiologie, Switzerland

Meeting Organisers

Australian Society for Microbiology
Suite 23, 20 Commercial Road
Melbourne VIC 3004

Enquiries to:

Janette Sofronidis, Conference Manager
E-mail: janette@theasm.com.au

Image courtesy of the Canberra Convention Bureau.