

Robert Ian Freshney – 1938-2019 – A Tribute

Amanda Capes-Davis / January 2019



Dr. Robert Ian Freshney passed away on 6 January 2019 at the age of 80 [1]. Ian was a distinguished scientist and educator, who will be much missed by his colleagues and the cell culture community.

Ian graduated in Zoology at the University of Glasgow in 1960. He commenced his research career with Professor John Paul, an eminent cell culture scientist and author of the textbook, *Cell and Tissue Culture*. After receiving his PhD, Ian worked with Dr. Robert Auerbach in Madison WI and spent a short time in Dr. Richard Ham's laboratory before returning to Glasgow. He spent

the rest of his research career at the Beatson Institute and the Department of Medical Oncology at the University of Glasgow

Ian's research was focused on tumor cell culture and differentiation. His laboratory grew early passage cell lines from tumors to test the effects of anti-cancer drugs and examined the effects of glucocorticoids and other factors on tumor cell differentiation. As part of this work, Ian developed a fascination with the practical aspects of cell culture and the use of cell lines as research models. He was a valued source of cell culture knowledge and expertise for many colleagues at local and international level.

Ian was an author of nine books [2] and almost 50 journal articles [3]. His most popular work was the textbook *Culture of Animal Cells*. First published in 1983, the book remains in print and is used by many laboratories as a resource for cell culture knowledge and training. The 8th edition is currently in preparation and will be re-named *Freshney's Culture of Animal Cells* in his honor [4].

He served as President of the European Tissue Culture Society and received their commendation for outstanding contribution to tissue culture research in 1994. He also received the Society for In Vitro Biology's Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award in 2001, in recognition for his exemplary research achievements and pioneering contributions to the field of cell culture [5].

Although he retired in 1998, Ian continued to write books and journal articles and to participate in cell culture training and education. He helped to shape the training courses held by the European Collection of Authenticated Cell Cultures (ECACC), where he was a key speaker for many years, and was a co-author of the *Guidelines for the Use of Cell Lines in Biomedical Research* [6].

Ian was a passionate advocate for authentication testing and kept a list of misidentified cell lines, drawing from the work of previous cell culture scientists and adding to the list as new publications appeared. As time passed, Ian attracted other like-minded scientists to work with him on this endeavour. In collaboration with Amanda Capes-Davis and other colleagues [7], the list was expanded and is now curated by the International Cell Line Authentication Committee (ICLAC) [8].

Ian Freshney leaves an extraordinary legacy of cell culture knowledge and wisdom. His passion for good cell culture practice is a light that he shared with many of his students and colleagues, who will continue to pass the torch to others in future.

REFERENCES

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Cell lines established by Robert Ian Freshney

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