Sammy Franks

Advanced the understanding of prostate cancer pathology

Leonard Maurice Franks, pathologist
(b 1921; q Durham 1942), died on 8 November 2011 from cardiopulmonary degeneration or ischaemic heart disease

Sammy Franks, a gentle and kindly man, contributed much to the understanding of cancer, both as a scientist and as a histopathologist. He combined pathological observations of the long, slow progress of prostate cancer with the development of tissue culture methods in his study of ageing, tumour latency, and cancer progression. He developed cell culture systems and animal models to study these fundamental characteristics of cancer before oncogenes had been discovered. He compared cell clones with high and low capacities for spreading and observed their genetic and phenotypic heterogeneity. Sammy was an early proponent of the concept of cancer heterogeneity, explaining the Mendelian or selective concept of cancer progression, where clones with greater fitness either to grow or to spread take the cancer to the next step in the neoplastic process.

His early contributions were mainly in prostate cancer pathology, and he was known as the doyen of prostate pathologists. In his early days as a working pathologist he studied prostates from autopsies and found a high incidence of latent cancer, which led him to conclude that almost all men will develop prostate cancer if they live long enough. Another key contribution was related to the development of tissue culture methods in his study of ageing, tumour latency, and cancer progression. Sammy was no more reverent of himself than others and regarded himself as one of the last amateurs. His work was admired abroad, and he had many visiting professorships in the United States. Toward retirement he wrote a book with Natalie Teich, An Introduction to the Cellular and Molecular Biology of Cancer (1986), which has been published in many editions. He contributed much in the administration and training of clinical fellows and scientists at the ICRF. One of his PhD students, Caroline Wigley, described him as a human being with a capital H. In 1945 Sammy married Mary Laing, who died a few months ago. He leaves their three sons.

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In lectures, sitting at the front in full view of the speaker, Sammy appeared to fall soundly asleep within the first five minutes. Yet on being asked a question at any time, he seemed to have heard every word. One of his common remarks at the end of a lecture was that he felt “like the drowning man coming up for the third time”—a phrase that resonates more the older you get. Sammy always instilled the ethics of science into his students, including objectivity and the importance of presenting all the data and evidence, rather than just those that support the argument.

Sammy’s humour was irrepressible, and he was never at a loss for words, but the teasing was not always appreciated. Sammy was a founder member of the Royal College of Pathologists, the New Flat Earth Society (which had a membership of two), the British Society for Cell Biology, and the European Tissue Culture Society. He was elected to the College of American Pathologists and was secretary general of the International Federation for Cell Biology.

Cite this as: BMJ 2011;343:d8061

John Masters
Peter John Banfield

Former surgeon commander, Royal Navy (b 1933; q Westminster Hospital Medical School 1957; MRCS, LRCP, Dip Ven), died from chronic heart failure on 18 December 2010

After prereregistration house officer posts in East Surrey Hospital, Peter Banfield started National Service in the Royal Navy in 1958 and then took a permanent commission. His many postings included stints in Singapore and Mauritius. He trained in genitourinary medicine, eventually becoming the sole specialist in the subject working full time for the Royal Navy. He retired in 1988. He loved competitive sailing, cricket, classical music, words, and wine. He leaves his wife, Sue, and four children and 11 grandchildren from his previous marriage.

Chris Jones

Cite this as: BMJ 2011;343:d7721

Michael John Cassells

Former pathologist Glazier Medical Clinic, Oshawa, Ontario (b 1928; q Barts 1951), d 26 September 2011

After appointments in Exeter and Sheffield, Michael John Cassells (“Mike”) emigrated to Canada in 1958, initially working at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto. He moved to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, in 1961, where he was chief of pathology. In 1969 he moved to Oshawa, Ontario, where he practised a combination of general practice and pathology. In his spare time he enjoyed playing golf and bridge. He leaves a wife and four daughters.

Barry Wheeler

Cite this as: BMJ 2011;343:d7522

John Scott Inkster

Former paediatric anaesthetist Newcastle Hospitals (b 1924; q Aberdeen 1946; FRCA), d 10 September 2011

After graduating, John Scott Inkster had his first taste of anaesthesia as a casualty officer in London. He trained in Newcastle and after a post in Toronto he developed a special interest in children. He was credited with the discovery of positive end expiratory pressure (PEEP), an adjunct to mechanical ventilation that is now universally used. A pioneer and innovator in paediatric anaesthesia, he was an early president of the Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists. After his retirement his practical skills were put to good use as a handyman at a local hospice. Predeceased by his first and second wives, he leaves three children.

Alan Craft

Cite this as: BMJ 2011;343:d7517

Richard Joseph Basil Heritage Jones

Former general practitioner Durrington, Wiltshire (b 1927; q St Mary’s Hospital, London, 1950), d 3 October 2011

Richard Joseph Basil Heritage Jones (“Dick”) was born in Jhansi, India, the son of a doctor serving in the army. After qualification he did his National Service as a surgeon lieutenant in the navy. He then joined a general practice in Durrington, Wiltshire (later to become the Avon Valley Practice). Dick was the archetypal rural general practitioner. He was a founding committee member of the Dispensing Doctors’ Association when it was formed in the early 1980s. His unexpected death followed a successful total hip replacement. He leaves his wife Joan and her family and, from his first marriage to Betty, two daughters, a son, and five grandchildren.

Jonathan Masters

Cite this as: BMJ 2011;343:d7719

John Carson Hamilton Loughridge

Former general practitioner, Belfast (b 1928; q Belfast 1950), d 1 October 2011

After qualifying from Queen’s University Belfast, John Carson Hamilton Loughridge (“Ian”), a third generation doctor in his family, worked as a general practitioner on the Antrim Road, Belfast, for almost 50 years. He took great pride in being a “family doctor” and enjoyed providing maternity services to many of his patients. He was an enthusiastic trainer and undergraduate teacher.

In latter years he served as chairman of the local war pensions tribunal service. He was an elder in the church and a keen golfer, with an encyclopaedic knowledge of sport. Predeceased by his wife, Gretta, he leaves three children and eight grandchildren.

Peter Loughridge

Cite this as: BMJ 2011;343:d7722

Wadi Yusuf Nassar

Former ear, nose, and throat surgeon Wythenshawe and Withington Hospitals, Manchester (b 1932; q 1956; OBE, MD, MCh, FRCS, LMSSA), d 6 November 2011

Wadi Yusuf Nassar was born near Jerusalem, the son of a priest in the Greek Orthodox Church. He graduated MD at the American University of Beirut in 1956 and came to England to train in ear, nose, and throat (ENT) surgery. He intended to return to Palestine to practise, but while working at Stockport Royal Infirmary, he met and married Gwen and obtained a consultant post at Wythenshawe and Withington Hospitals in 1970. He spoke at international conferences and helped develop tympanometry, Teflon paste augmentation of the vocal fold, and training schemes for junior doctors in the Middle East. In 2005 he was awarded an OBE for his work as a trustee of the Manchester Council for Community Relations. Predeceased by Gwen, Wadi is survived by their son and daughter.

Philip H Jones

Cite this as: BMJ 2011;343:d7511

Ravi Sockanathan

Former genitourinary physician, Leeds, and general practitioner, Brentwood (b 1950, q Sri Lanka 1976), died after a brief illness on 28 October 2011

After moving to the United Kingdom in 1983, Ravi Sockanathan trained in genitourinary medicine and general practice and settled down in Yorkshire until he became primary care lead in sexual health for Brentwood and Billericay primary care trust. He died in his native country soon after delivering the guest lecture to the Sri Lankan College of Venereologists.

Sati Ariyananayagam

Cite this as: BMJ 2011;343:d7513