

Guest Editors

DOI: 10.1038/sj/onc/1205059

Dr JW Shay

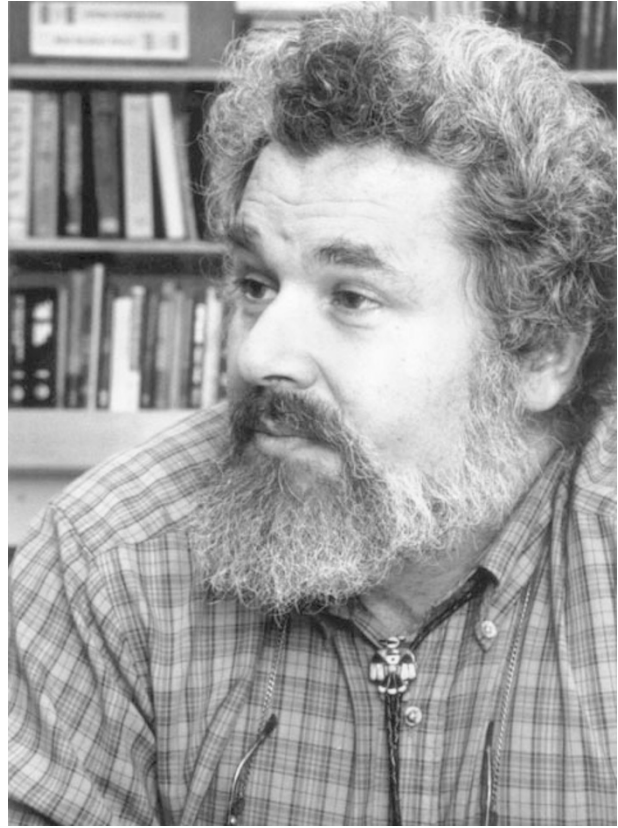


Jerry W Shay earned his BA and MA at the University of Texas at Austin and his PhD at the University of Kansas at Lawrence. He did his postdoctoral work at the University of Colorado in Boulder with Keith Porter and David Prescott before moving to Dallas where he is currently a professor of Cell Biology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas and an Ellison Medical Foundation Senior Scholar.

Woodring E Wright received his BA from Harvard College and then completed his MD/PhD at Stanford University in California, where he earned his PhD in the laboratory of Leonard Hayflick. He pursued postdoctoral studies at the Pasteur Institute in Paris with François Gros and then joined the faculty of Southwestern Medical Center where he is currently a professor of Cell Biology.

In 1985 Shay and Wright began what has become a very close and productive collaboration. This led to the development of the two-stage model for cellular senescence for which they shared the Allied Signal Award for research on aging in 1995 and in 2001 the American Aging Association Hayflick award. They are both members of Geron's scientific advisory board and

Dr WE Wright



have over 18 patents allowed on their telomere and telomerase-based research. Both have served on the Scientific Research Board of the American Foundation for Aging Research (AFAR). Drs Shay and Wright are the co-holders of the Southland Financial Corporation Distinguished Chair in Geriatric Research at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.

Drs Shay and Wright are perhaps best known for two seminal papers in the telomerase field. In 1994 they published in the journal *Science* a paper describing a PCR-based assay for measuring telomerase activity (popularly called the TRAP assay). In this manuscript they and their collaborators at the Geron Corporation (Menlo Park, CA, USA) showed that approximately 90% of all human tumor specimens are positive for TRAP activity while normal tissues were TRAP negative. This paper has been cited over 1600 times. In 1998, also in collaboration with Geron scientists, they described in another *Science* paper the extension of human cell lifespan by introduction of telomerase in normal cells. This work is considered the most definitive work demonstrating that telomeres are the molecular basis of replicative senescence. This paper has already been cited over 700 times.