

Jeff Pollard (1950–2023)

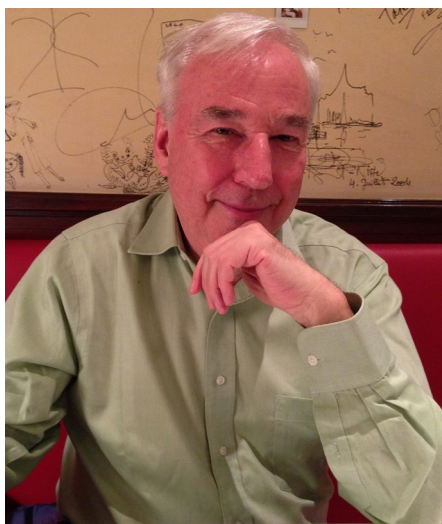
By Lisa M. Coussens, Michele De Palma, Samanta A. Mariani & Luca Cassetta

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Internationally renowned macrophage biologist Jeffrey (Jeff) W. Pollard passed away peacefully at the age of 73 on 1 May 2023. Jeff was Professor of Resilience Biology in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine at the University of Edinburgh, UK, Professor Emeritus of Developmental and Molecular Biology at the Albert Einstein Medical College of New York, USA, and for nearly a decade was the director of the Medical Research Council (MRC) Centre for Reproductive Health (CRH) at the University of Edinburgh.

Jeff graduated with a first-class honours degree in zoology from The University of Sheffield, UK, followed by a PhD with the Imperial Cancer Research Fund in London, UK, a post-doctoral fellowship at the Ontario Cancer Institute in Toronto, Canada, and then a faculty position at King's College University in London. In 1988, he joined the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, where he worked for 24 years before moving to Edinburgh in 2013 as the director of the MRC CRH.

Jeff's research passions were in women's reproductive health, specifically the mechanisms of action of female sex steroid hormones in controlling cell proliferation, and in tumor-associated macrophage (TAM) biology, focusing on their multifaceted contribution to cancer progression. His longstanding collaborations with Richard Stanley identified the macrophage growth factor, colony-stimulating factor 1 (CSF1), as a regulator of placental development¹, underlying macrophage deficiency in the osteopetrotic (op/op) mouse², and being crucial for postnatal mammary gland development during pregnancy³. These studies presaged his group's seminal research identifying macrophages as master regulators of mammary adenocarcinoma development and metastasis⁴. It was this work that set the stage for much of Jeff's research in cancer biology for the last 23 years, during which his laboratory contributed over 200 publications, culminating in a comprehensive review providing a timeline of TAM biology in



cancer⁵—one of his final gifts to the community. Jeff's contributions to our current understanding of macrophage biology as regulators of tissue homeostasis and disease progression set the stage for the development of anti-cancer myeloid-targeted agents that are now in clinical trials as combination therapies for numerous cancer types.

Aside from Jeff's remarkable scientific contributions, he was recognized for his outstanding mentorship skills and his willingness to help early career researchers to succeed in academia. Among many honors, Jeff was awarded the Medal of Honour for Basic Science Research from the American Cancer Society for his studies in tumour immunology (2010), the Rothschild Yvette–Meynet Curie award (2009), the Royal Society Wolfson Research Merit Award (2013–2018), and the Wellcome Trust Senior Investigator Award (2013–2021). He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology, Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences, and Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences.

Together with his life-long love and partner Dr Ooi-Thye Chong, Jeff shared an enduring passion for delicious food and Japanese art.

Their extensive and remarkable collection of artworks has been exhibited publicly several times and will, in part, be installed as a permanent collection at the British Museum in London. This is one of Jeff's most precious legacies, of which he was very much proud.

Jeff will be forever remembered for his inspiring contributions to science, and for his tenacity, wit and sense of humor. We will all miss his insightful comments at meetings, astute guidance about career issues and navigating the politics of modern-day science, and especially his deep knowledge of the best eateries on the planet.

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Competing interests

L.C. is co-founder of Macomics, a biotech devoted to developing immunotherapy agents for cancer therapy. L.M.C., M.D.P. and S.A.M. declare no competing interests.