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## Obituary

### Professor Mike Price



The recent death of Mike Price, after a year-long illness with cancer, comes as a major blow to his many colleagues and friends. He died on 23 November last year at the age of 52.

Mike spent his scientific career based at the University of Nottingham, where he obtained his first degree in chemistry in 1969 and subsequently his Ph.D. (in Cancer Research) in 1972. After spending several years in the Cancer Research Campaign Laboratories, he was appointed to a Senior Lectureship in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences where he remained until his death, by which time he had been awarded his D.Sc. degree and promoted to a Readership. It is poignant that the much deserved Professorship, in recognition of his international standing as a scientist and educator, was conferred posthumously.

Mike's research was focused on antibodies which react with tumour-associated antigens and through this he achieved an exceptional insight into the nature of these immunological interactions. He saw the infinite diversity of molecular libraries as a resource for probing the fine specificity of antibody–antigen interactions and was able to apply this understanding in the engineering of antibodies with the improved characteristics required for tumour targeting.

He was a pioneer in 'translational research', moving the findings and discoveries of the laboratory into the clinic for patient benefit and was committed to the development of antibody-based therapy for cancer patients. This kind of research, which involves keeping

to the designated aim, can in fact be more demanding on ingenuity and commitment than the so called 'basic' research, which allows change of direction if the road initially chosen narrows or becomes too difficult. Mike worked with both academic and industrial colleagues to achieve his aims and did in fact see the antibody he developed go through to the clinic for evaluation in patients with bladder cancer.

As well as having achieved international recognition for his scientific distinction, Mike played a major role in the development of European interactions in his role as Secretary General of the European Association for Cancer Research (EACR). His commitment, inspiration and administrative talents were crucial to the enormous developments within the Association during the 21 years he was in office (1977–1998). Although he relinquished this position to take over as General Secretary to the Federation of European Cancer Societies (FECS), the EACR secretariat remains in Nottingham, giving a much-needed stability to the administration in the capable hands of Paul Saunders.

Mike had significant talents as an educator; throughout his career, a series of students were inspired by his enthusiasm and understanding. However, it is typical of him that he regarded this interaction with many talented young researchers as a privilege as well as a pleasure. In his new position at FECS, he was able to broaden the use of his educational ability by helping to develop a pan-European accreditation system for CME in Oncology. A FECS Education Unit was established in Not-

tingham, and the project ‘Promoting lifelong learning in cancer for medical and allied health professionals across Europe’ has been granted funding by the European Commission. These activities reflect the breadth of his interest and grasp of cancer research and the necessity for scientific-medical collaborations and interactions.

Mike has left a heritage in his work which we shall all appreciate and benefit from. His presence, and the

friendship of a cheerful, kind and humorous colleague will be sorely missed.

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