



Introduction to Special Issue on Microbial Metabolism of Aromatic Hydrocarbons: A Tribute to David T Gibson



This Special Issue of the *Journal of Industrial Microbiology & Biotechnology* is designed as a tribute to Professor David T Gibson of the University of Iowa. It is based in part on a Symposium and two Seminars, also a tribute to Professor Gibson, which were presented at the 1996 General Meeting of the American Society for Microbiology in New Orleans, LA.

David Gibson is a pioneer in the study of the microbial metabolism of aromatic hydrocarbons, and is considered by many to be the most influential contributor to the field. His research has contributed greatly to the understanding of the mechanisms of biodegradation and biotransformation of these compounds, the enzymes involved, and the genetic regulation of the pathways.

Dave is a native of Yorkshire, UK, where he attended Sir William Turner's Grammar School in Redcar. In 1957 he joined the Department of Biochemistry at the University of Leeds, where he completed both undergraduate and graduate studies, and began his research in the field with several important contributions.

After postdoctoral appointments in the School of Pharmacy at the University of Wisconsin and the Department of Microbiology at the University of Illinois, he moved to the Department of Microbiology at the University of Texas in Austin. Early on, he made at least two seminal discoveries: the demonstration that molecular oxygen was incorporated into aromatic hydrocarbons during their metabolism,

and the fact that *cis*-dihydrodiols were intermediates in aromatic hydrocarbon degradation by bacteria. This was followed by more than two decades of extremely productive research, uninterrupted despite a devastating illness in 1983. Dave's research over the years is characterized by the imaginative integration of microbiology, biochemistry, enzymology, organic chemistry, analytical chemistry, and more recently, molecular biology.

In 1988, Dave moved to the Department of Microbiology at the University of Iowa, where he and his group continue to produce a stream of important contributions to the field. He has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the Proctor and Gamble Award in Applied and Environmental Microbiology, and the highest honor of the Society for Industrial Microbiology, The Charles Thom Award. We are very pleased to add this tribute to the list.

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