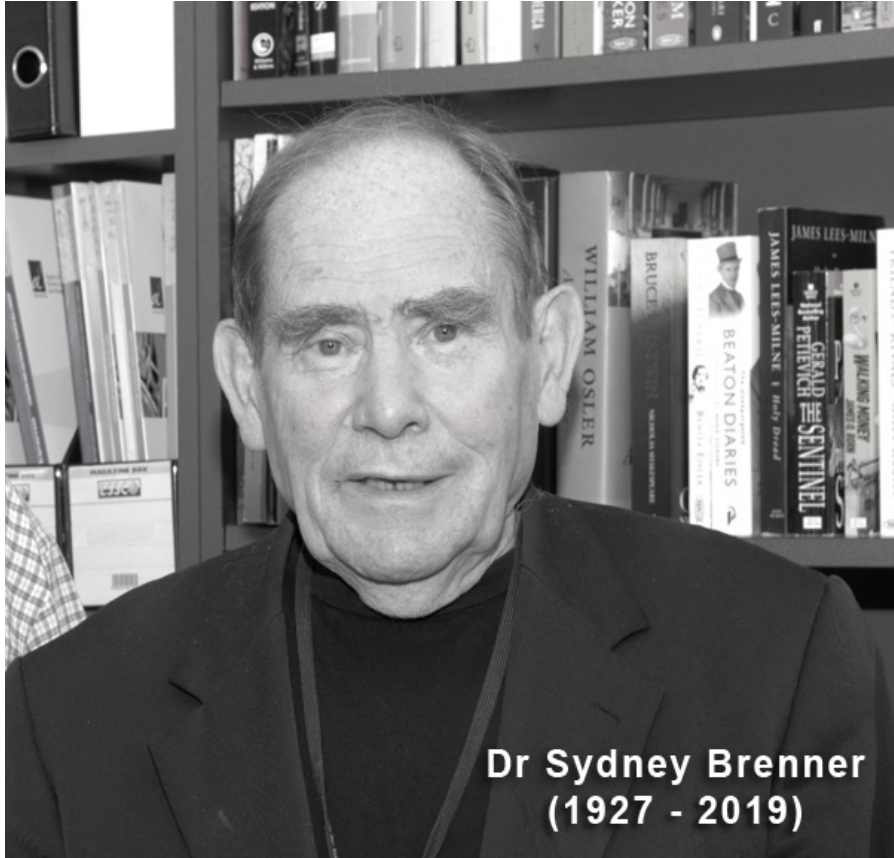


In memory of Dr Sydney Brenner (1927 - 2019)

Wednesday, 10 Apr 2019



The Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology (IMCB) deeply mourns the passing away of Nobel laureate Dr Sydney Brenner in Singapore on April 5, 2019. Dr Brenner, a pioneering molecular biologist, was instrumental in setting up IMCB, the first Biomedical Sciences Research Institute in Singapore, in 1985. He was the founding Chairman of the IMCB Scientific Advisory Board from 1985 to 1995, and a Co-Principal Investigator of the Comparative Genomics Laboratory at IMCB since its inception in 1991.

Dr Brenner was born in South Africa on January 13, 1927. After completing a degree in Medicine and another one in Science, he obtained a scholarship to pursue D.Phil. in Physical Chemistry at the Oxford University. In 1953, he drove from Oxford to Cambridge to meet James Watson and Francis Crick and to look at the DNA structure that the duo had just elucidated. There and then he decided to join their laboratory in Cambridge and make molecular biology as his career. In a career spanning more than six decades, Dr. Brenner made several seminal discoveries including cracking the genetic code, identifying messenger RNA, establishing *C. elegans* as a genetic model, introducing the compact genome of the pufferfish (*fugu*) as a model vertebrate genome, developing the concept of combinatorial chemistry and pioneering the next-generation sequencing by inventing the microbead array-

based DNA sequencing technology. In addition to several awards such as the Lasker Award (1971 and 2000) and the British Companion of Honour (1987), Dr Brenner was conferred the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2002 for his work on *C. elegans*.

Dr Brenner played a pivotal role in attracting highly talented scientists from around the world to join IMCB. Under his guidance, IMCB rapidly acquired international recognition and established itself as one of the leading research institutes in the world. Together with Byrappa Venkatesh, Dr Brenner also started the first genomics laboratory in Singapore in 1991 at IMCB. This laboratory successfully sequenced and published the fugu genome (*Science*, 2002) soon after the completion of the human genome, and was a forerunner of other genome sequencing projects elsewhere in the world.

Prof. Hong Wan Jin, Executive Director of IMCB said “I was saddened to learn of the passing of Sydney Brenner. What a huge loss of a great man and true scientist who has influenced many generations of scientists across several fields of biomedical sciences, especially those in Singapore during the past few decades. He was instrumental in the setting up of IMCB and by serving as the chair of IMCB SAB for the first decade, IMCB has emerged as a top research institute in the region with global reputation. He is also the scientific man behind the concept of Biopolis, creating a critical mass of integrated community of research, technology, innovation, and commercialization. In recent years, he was focusing on the grooming of A*STAR scholars to the next generation of scientific leaders. His scientific contributions in Singapore are the most prominent in comparative genomics! We will miss Sydney forever!”. IMCB is grateful to Dr Sydney Brenner for his immense contributions – his legacy continues with the accomplishments of the many young scientists he has helped to inspire and nurture.



Comparative Genomics Lab, IMCB