In Memoriam

Tucker Collins, M.D., Ph.D., 1952–2007

The discipline of Pathology and the field of Vascular Biology have lost a dynamic leader, a gifted scientist, a dedicated educator, and a cherished colleague, with the passing of Tucker Collins, M.D., Ph.D. (Figure 1), the Pathologist-in-Chief of Children's Hospital, Boston and the S. Burt Wolbach Professor of Pathology at Harvard Medical School, on June 8, 2007. Despite being diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumor in January 2007, he had remained active, both personally and professionally, up to the day of his death. He leaves behind his wife, Mary Whitley, and their daughter, Caroline.

Born in Lorain, Ohio, Tucker received his B.A. from Amherst College in 1975 and completed his M.D. and Ph.D. degrees at the University of Rochester School of Medicine in 1981. He joined the Harvard Medical School community, training as a Resident in Anatomical Pathology at the Brigham and Women's Hospital under Dr. Ramzi Cotran. In the early 1980s Tucker became one of the first research fellows in the newly established Vascular Research Division of the Brigham and Women's Hospital, working with Jordan Pober. In 1985, he joined the faculty of Harvard Medical School and the Department of Pathology at the Brigham and Women's Hospital and advanced through the academic ranks to Professor of Pathology in 1998. In 2001, he answered the call to become the Pathologist-in-Chief of Children's Hospital, Boston, succeeding his former chair and mentor, the late Ramzi Cotran. During his relatively short tenure, he led that department through a period of unprecedented growth, in both its clinical services and its research programs.

Initially as a postdoctoral fellow and then as an independent investigator in the Vascular Research Division at the Brigham and Women's Hospital, Tucker blazed a trail studying the molecular biology of vascular endothelium. His seminal contributions included some of the first well-studied examples of activation of endothelium by proinflammatory cytokines, the cDNA and genomic cloning of human platelet-derived growth factor A and B chains—as well as the first description of the transcriptional regulation of these molecules in the human endothelial cell, the functional dissection of the promoters of VCAM-1 and E-selectin, exploration of the central role of the NF-kappa B transcription factor family in endothelial homeostasis, and the extension of these studies to other pathophysiologically relevant transcriptional regulators such as Egr-1. More recently his group had focused on the role of

Dr. Tucker Collins (1952–2007)

the SCAN family of zinc finger transcription factors in development and disease. His final efforts had turned to an understanding of the pathogenesis of arterial disease in pediatric heart transplant recipients. Always innovating, his group worked at the cutting edge of the field, and the laboratory refrigerator contained a bottle of champagne, at-the-ready, to toast the cloning of a new gene or other accomplishment by a fellow or student. He led by example—he was the first one in the laboratory in the wee hours of the morning and was always near the bench; his energy was seemingly boundless, and his enthusiasm for doing science infectious. His numerous trainees, and collaborators, have populated academia and industry, representing an important part of his legacy.

A gifted communicator, Tucker was also a vibrant teacher and mentor in the Harvard Medical School community. He served for more than a decade as the Associate Master of the Peabody Society, interacting with

medical school students on a daily basis, providing academic guidance and personal support to literally hundreds of individuals during the critical formative stages of their career development. He was a passionate advocate for Pathology as an academic discipline and provided dynamic leadership as a Course Director in the core undergraduate medical curriculum. His impact as an educator was further amplified by his role as a co-editor of the sixth edition of *Robbins Pathological Basis of Disease*, as well as the author of numerous definitive reviews and book chapters. On the national scene, he contributed in multiple capacities—as a member and chair of Pathology A Study Section, as a member of the editorial boards of *The American Journal of Pathology* and other key journals in the field, as a founding member of the North American Vascular Biology Association, and as President of the American Society for Investigative Pathology and of the New England Society of Pathologists.

Tucker Collins' influence and impact professionally was a natural extension of his personal attributes—he was tall (6 foot 6 inches) but not intimidating in manner; his broad smile was disarming, and his collegiality, genuine. His personal love of doing science was matched

only by his enthusiasm for interacting with others in that endeavor. He was daring but deliberate—attributes that served him well in his passion for offshore sailing (culminating in the successful finish of the Marion-to-Bermuda race in 2003 in his sailboat *Sapphire*). Those who were privileged to have known him will remember him with fondness and respect, and the knowledge that he lived each day to the fullest will provide some solace for his untimely passing.

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Editor's Note: Personal testimonials from Tucker Collins' friends and colleagues are posted in the August 2007 issue of *ASIP Pathways* at <http://www.asip.org/pubs/pathways/Aug2007.pdf>.