

OBITUARY - James G. White MD, 1929–2016

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Jim White died peacefully at his home in Minneapolis on July 8, 2016. He was 86 years old, and had retired from his position as a Regents' Professor at the University of Minnesota in 2014. He had worked at the University of Minnesota continuously for over 50 years, and was also a medical graduate of the same university. Jim was very well known to those of us working in the platelet field, and his achievements were recognized in the Distinguished Career Award he received from the ISTH in 1987.

Mostly I saw Jim from a distance. He was one of those greats who presented his work at many international meetings on platelets. I became aware of him in the early 1970s. He was an electron microscopist and presented superb electron photomicrographs of platelet ultrastructure. I remember being entranced with the detail of the structures he presented. Jim was also an artist. He produced detailed drawings of the structures that he had unveiled, drawings that have been reproduced repeatedly over many years in the introductions to student theses and dissertations.

For many years, the front cover of this journal carried an image of an activated platelet. The citation on the inside front cover read: "The electron photomicrograph used to prepare the front cover of *Platelets* was taken by Marlys Krumwiede using a low-voltage, high resolution scanning electron microscope. Marlys works with James G. White at the University of Minnesota Medical School." As the Editor-in-Chief I had asked Jim to supply an image suitable for the journal and this was the one he came up with. It was entirely appropriate for a journal dedicated to platelet activation and its consequences.

Jim published his work in many journals and *Platelets* was one of those that he selected. Most often his papers were packed with beautiful electron micrographs of platelets and their substructures. He told me he chose the journal because the reproductions were of the quality he expected in papers that bore his name. Certainly, Jim went to a great deal of effort to ensure the material supplied was completely fit for purpose. Back in the days when journals received paper copies of submissions rather than the electronic versions that typify the modern age, Jim's submissions were always perfectly presented. Every electron micrograph was mounted in its own photographic surround and carefully labelled. The figure legends were detailed enough for the reader to fully understand the message being conveyed. This attention to detail, I suspect, matched the same attention that Jim applied to the experimental processes that resulted in the final images that were presented.

Looking back, I can find 41 papers in *Platelets* in which Jim was either the sole author or presented his work with others (Table I). The early editions of the journal contained a series of reviews from experts in the field. The review Jim provided (with Ginés Escolar) was on the concepts of platelet membrane (Table I, entry 1). Early articles that were submitted for publication dealt with specific aspects of the platelet activation process (Table I, entry 2)

and with the location of important functional glycoproteins on the surface of platelets (Table I, entry 3). Over the years, Jim and his colleagues submitted many papers that covered inherited syndromes. These included articles on the gray platelet syndrome (Table I, entries 4, 5), the York platelet syndrome (Table I, entry 6), the Chediak-Higashi Syndrome (Table I, entry 7), the Hermansky-Pudlak Syndrome (Table I, entry 8), X-linked GATA-1 macrothrombocytopenia (Table I, 9– 12), the Medich Giant platelet syndrome (Table I, entries 13, 14), the Sebastian platelet syndrome (Table I, entry 15), the Jacobsen syndrome (Table I, entry 16) and the White platelet syndrome (Table I, entries 17–20).

In other papers, he published his observations on giant electron dense chains and clusters (Table I, entries 21–25), platelet glycosomes (Table I, entries 26) and other intracellular structures (Table I, entries 27). He also had a special interest in secretory mechanisms (Table I, entries 28–32), the influence of chelating agents on platelet function (Table I, entries 33–36) and events associated with clot retraction (Table I, entries 37). Jim also took an interest in how bacteria interact with platelets (Table I, entries 38, 39) and there were even two papers on camel platelets (Table I, entries 40, 41).

In 2010, I was one of those involved in organizing the Nottingham Platelet Conference [1]. The other organizers were Wolfgang Lösche and Peter Spangenberg who initiated the series of conferences held in Erfurt in the old East Germany. The Nottingham Platelet Conference, as did the Erfurt Platelet Conferences before it, attracted participants from all over Europe together with a few from the United States [2]. Jim White was one of the invited speakers and he came all the way from Minnesota specially to present his work to us. His presentation was entitled “Platelet ultrastructural pathology: What we know and do not know”. The talk portrayed Jim’s ability to think beyond the detailed ultrastructural findings in, for example, the gray platelet syndrome, and to wonder what are the causes and consequences of the abnormalities. Other invited speakers included greats such as Gus Born, Alan Nurden, Ken Clemetson, Steve Watson, Johan Heemskerk, Mauro Torti, Rob Storey, Bernard Payrastre and Alexey Mazurov. The organizers were delighted with the outcome of the meeting and we still hear positive comments from those who attended. The presentations from the invited speakers, including that from Jim White, were superb. I carry happy memories of that time with me to the present day.

References

1. Abstracts presented at the Nottingham Platelet Conference, Platelets – Past, Present and Future. Platelets 2010; 21(5): 393–419
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Table I. Selected Platelets publications authored and co-authored by James G. White.

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Jim White registering at the start of the Nottingham Platelet Conference, 2010.



Jim White delivering his lecture at the Nottingham Platelet Conference, 2010.