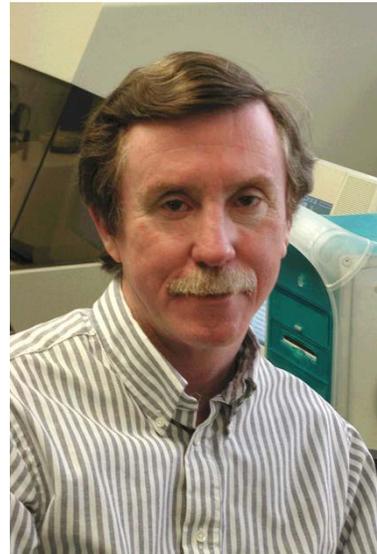


Thomas G. O'Brien, PhD

Thomas G. O'Brien, PhD, 70, passed away suddenly but peacefully, surrounded by family, on November 14, 2017, in Pueblo, Colorado. Dr. O'Brien was a professor emeritus and the former deputy director of LIMR. He retired from LIMR in 2011.

Dr. O'Brien was a world-renowned cancer biologist who first identified the role of polyamines in cancer development. Polyamines are ubiquitous nutrients that are essential for all cell growth and proliferation, but cancer cells have a particularly voracious appetite for them. In his work, Dr. O'Brien pioneered a molecular and genetic understanding of how polyamines drive cancer.



He also discovered disease modifier genes that determine why polyamines are so important in cancer. Lastly, building on his discoveries, he pioneered a new polyamine-targeting therapy suitable to treat nearly any form of cancer. He held multiple patents, including those on a genetically engineered mouse and a clinically significant human DNA sequence that can predict cancer susceptibility.

Born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1947, he graduated from Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota, in 1968 with a BA in chemistry. He received his doctorate in oncology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1975. His postdoctoral training was completed at The Wistar Institute, Philadelphia, where he stayed for the next 15 years, rising to associate professor.

In 1990, he came to LIMR and was named deputy director in 2000. He also served as a professor of dermatology and cutaneous biology at Thomas Jefferson University.

Between 1975 and 2013, Dr. O'Brien published more than 100 manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals. He served as an associate editor for the leading journals *Nutrition and Cancer* and *Cancer Research*. His research was funded throughout his career by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and he was a member of the American Association for Cancer Research and the American Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. At his retirement in 2011, he was one of an elite group of top U.S. cancer research scientists to have received the most lifetime federal funding for their research from the NIH's National Cancer Institute.

"Dr. O'Brien was among the most accomplished of the cancer biologists who have worked at LIMR in its long and storied history," said George Prendergast, PhD, President and CEO of LIMR. "He was a treasured member of our faculty."

Susan Gilmour, PhD, a professor at LIMR who did her postdoctoral training at Dr. O'Brien's Wistar lab and then worked with him at LIMR, recalled: "Tom was one of the most brilliant scientists with whom I've had the privilege to work. He was also very modest about his many research accomplishments."

Dr. O'Brien is survived by his wife, Anita (nee Impellizeri) O'Brien, as well as his four children, Kelly King-O'Brien (Charissa) of Ithaca, New York; Carrie O'Brien of DuBois, Pennsylvania; and Armando O'Brien and Ramon O'Brien of Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania. He is also survived by his grandchildren, Mia and Luna King-O'Brien, and his identical twin brother Dennis J. O'Brien of Ambler, Pennsylvania; sisters Mary Kay Stodden of West Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and Joanne (Terry) Flynn of Stockbridge, Massachusetts; and brother Joseph (Kellie) O'Brien of Pueblo, Colorado; as well as his aunt Catherine Daly of Bloomfield, Connecticut; and several cousins, nieces and nephews.

Inurnment was private. To further support cancer research, in lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation in Tom O'Brien's name to LIMR, 100 East Lancaster Avenue, Wynnewood, PA 19096.