Dedication to Dr. Richard T. Johnson

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This issue of *Neurotherapeutics* is focused on neurovirology and is dedicated to Dr. Richard T. Johnson, who passed away at the age of 84 on 22 November 2015. The term “neurovirology” was first used by Dr. Johnson, although he credited the coining of it to a grants manager who truncated the title of a grant he had submitted to the National Institutes of Health. Nonetheless, Dick, as he was known, was unquestionably the father of neurovirology. He pioneered the entire field, with a focus on pathogenesis, and developed research programs on several viruses that invade the nervous system. Initially, each fellow he trained was given a different virus on which to develop a research program, and the laboratory investigators and trainees purposefully came from many different backgrounds. He believed that to understand virus-induced disease of the nervous system required expertise not only in virology, but also in neurology, pathology, immunology, animal models, and eventually molecular biology. This approach resulted in a huge impact on the understanding of a large range of viral diseases, for example measles, mumps, rubella, visna, arbovirus encephalitis, herpes simplex, rabies, and HIV, but perhaps more importantly, a legacy of training many investigators who, along with their trainees, continue to contribute to the field.

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Dr. Johnson’s career in Neurovirology started in the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, where he studied the pathogenesis of central nervous system infection by enteroviruses. He then trained in Neurology at Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, and then worked as a postdoctoral fellow with Frank Fenner at the John Curtin School of Medical Research in Canberra, where he began working on arboviruses that cause encephalitis. Upon his return to the US, he joined the faculty at Case Western Reserve University and established his research program (1964–69). In 1969, he was recruited by Guy McKhann to join the new Department of Neurology at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine as the Dwight D. Eisenhower Professor. From 1988 to 1997 he was the Director of the Department of Neurology. Following his retirement he was appointed a Distinguished Service Professor of Johns Hopkins University, a position he held until his death in November 2015.

Dick passed away about the same time as Zika virus was emerging in this hemisphere. Had he been alive today, he would not have been surprised. Over the last few years he had witnessed the emergence of Ebola, West Nile virus, Enterovirus-D68, and others. While it appears that there has been a sudden increase in emerging pathogens, Dick had written as early as 1995, in the inaugural issue of *Journal of Neurovirology* that, “In my 38 years in the field I have seen scores of new viruses related to acute neurological diseases and a new agent appears causing unprecedented numbers of infections with new syndromes and novel questions of pathogenesis”. Our memories are often recent and short. Clearly, there has been a continuous invasion by emerging pathogens for decades and probably much longer.

Although best known for his contributions to neurovirology, Dr. Johnson also had a tremendous impact on the field of neurology. He held several leadership positions in professional societies; these positions included Vice President of the

American Academy of Neurology (1975–77), Chair, Scientific Advisory Board, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Society (1975–81), President of the American Neurological Association (1986–87), and Chair of the Medical Advisory Board of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (1985–90). He chaired several key committees for the National Academy of Sciences and the Food and Drug Administration. He served on the editorial board of 22 journals and was editor-in-chief of the *Annals of Neurology* (1997–2005). He received numerous awards; notable amongst these was the Arthur Weil award of the American Association of Neuropathology, the Pioneer

award of the International Society of Neurovirology, the Soriano award of the World Federation of Neurology, the Charcot award of the International Federation of Multiple Sclerosis Societies, the Smadel Medal of the Infectious Disease Society of America, and membership in the Institute of Medicine/National Academy of Medicine and the Association of American Physicians.

Dr. Johnson was a legend with broad impact. His contributions to the disciplines of neurovirology and neurology are unsurpassed and he inspired the careers of many. It is fitting that this issue of *Neurotherapeutics* is dedicated to his memory.