Robert D. Wells

Current Position: Professor Emeritus of the Center for Genome Research, Institute of Biosciences and Technology, at Texas A&M System Health Science Center in Houston, TX

Education: Ph.D. in Biochemistry (1964) from University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Non-scientific Interests: Bike riding with my wife, Dotty, at interesting locations; jogging; hiking; other sports; activities with my six grandchildren; travel; poetry composition; and a wide range of other interests.

I recently have accepted Professor Emeritus status in order to enable younger faculty to win grant support for building research careers and to enjoy the thrill of discovery.

Also, it is with great effort and passion that I continue to advocate in Washington, D.C. for enhanced funding of scientific and medical research.

I became interested in hereditary neurological diseases upon the discovery of repeating triplex repeat sequences in the genes associated with myotonic dystrophy, fragile X syndrome, and about 18 other neurological syndromes. The expansion and contraction mechanisms of these sequences are intimately involved in the disease etiologies. Since working with sequences of this type in the polymeric form in the 1960s and 1970s in relationship to genetic code studies, I appreciated the likelihood that non-B DNA conformations would participate in the mechanisms of replication, repair, and recombination that account for the expansion processes. Thus, my lab had most of the tools necessary in 1990 to investigate the molecular mechanisms of the genetic instabilities that were responsible for the neurological diseases.

Read Dr. Wells' article entitled: Mutation spectra in Fragile X Syndrome Induced by Deletions of CGG-CCG Repeats

http://www.jbc.org/cgi/content/full/284/12/7407