

William Jarrett, FRS

Bill Jarrett died on 27.08.2011.

He was Professor of Veterinary Pathology at the University of Glasgow from 1968 to 1990 and was the most eminent veterinary pathologist of his generation.

His seminal discoveries had a wide impact on animal and human welfare. With his colleagues he helped develop the first vaccine against a nematode parasite, lungworm in cattle. He discovered feline leukaemia virus, the retrovirus that causes leukaemia and lymphoma in cats, which directly influenced the subsequent finding of human T cell leukaemia virus and then HIV. His seminal contributions to papillomavirus research cannot be overestimated. His observation that different BPVs infect different epithelia demonstrated the differential tropism of many papillomaviruses, and his discovery that BPV4 causes alimentary tract cancer in cattle was proof that this family of viruses is implicated in cancer development. Following a thorough study of the biology of the virus, he and his colleagues developed a vaccine showing that papillomavirus infection can be prevented, and paving the way to the development of the HPV vaccine in women.

In addition to, and because of, his research successes, his legacy is the development of the Glasgow Veterinary School into one of the major research institutes of comparative medicine of the world. He was a truly inspirational mentor to his younger colleagues and students, many of whom proceeded to develop a successful scientific career of their own.

He had an international reputation and was awarded honorary degrees and achievement awards from many universities and scientific societies in Europe and North America. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society and the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

In addition to science, he loved everything that was fun in life: music (he played jazz trumpet and guitar), sailing, climbing and skiing, good food and good wine.

He is remembered with much affection and gratitude.