

In memoriam—Walter J. Gehring

Markus Affolter¹ · Erich A. Nigg¹

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Just about 1 year ago, on 29th May 2014, Walter Jakob Gehring, one of the key figures in the field of molecular developmental biology, died from the injuries that he had suffered in a car accident. He left behind his wife Elisabeth, his two sons Stephan and Thomas, and their respective families. He also left behind a large family of scientists, who had spent parts of their education at the Biozentrum of the University of Basel, Switzerland, some as students, most as postdocs. Many members of this large scientific family have continued their own research in laboratories around the world and have themselves become leaders in their respective fields.

Many key observations were made in Walter Gehring's laboratory at the Biozentrum from 1973 to 2009. Of particular interest to the readership of *Chromosoma*, these include the discovery of the homeobox, a conserved DNA sequence element present in many developmental control genes both in

animals and plants. In addition, Walter's lab is famous for the invention of enhancer trapping, as well as the discovery that the gene *eyeless* in flies is homologous to the gene *Pax6* in vertebrates and, even more strikingly, that its ectopic expression in flies can induce ectopic eye structures on wings and legs.

To honor Walter Gehring's lifetime achievements and the impact of the work carried out in his laboratory in a number of fields of biology, a series of articles will be published in *Chromosoma* from researchers who have either been trained in his lab or have been close friends of his. The first of these articles, by Robert K. Maeda and François Karch, is published in this issue. Additional articles will follow and include contributions from Markus Affolter and Thomas Bürglin, Herbert Jäckle, Ginés Morata, Renato Paro, Leslie Pick, and Rolf Zeller.

✉ Erich A. Nigg
erich.nigg@unibas.ch

Markus Affolter
markus.affolter@unibas.ch

¹ Biozentrum, Klingelbergstrasse 50/70, CH-4056 Basel, Switzerland