

NEWS AND VIEWS

Obituary: Dr Martin Tabler (1956-2005)

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Dr Martin Tabler who was killed in a tragic accident on 3rd April. His enormous contributions to the field of plant virology and gene regulation and antisense technologies will have lasting effect on the subjects. He was an author of over 60 articles in peer reviewed journals and books, and also patented several applications in the field of ribozyme technologies. At the time of his death, Martin Tabler was serving as a Research Professor at the Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (IMBB), Crete, Greece, where he lived with his wife and colleague at IMBB, Dr Mina Tsagris, and two children.

Martin Tabler was born on 20th June 1956 in Stuttgart, Germany, to Erwin and Ingeborg Tabler. He obtained his high school education at Ludwigshafen. In 1976, he moved to Eberhard-Karls-University in Tübingen and in 1981 to the Max-Planck Institute to study biochemistry. From 1982-1983 he worked on his diploma thesis on “Cloning and sequencing of potato spindle tuber viroid RNA” in the department of Viroid Research at the Max-Planck-Institute for Biochemistry in Martinsried near Munich under the supervision of Professor Heinz Sängler. He decided to stay in the same laboratory to pursue his doctoral studies and in 1986 completed his PhD on “Analysis of the relationship between structure and function of the potato spindle tuber viroid with the aid of DNA and RNA constructs”.

During and after his PhD he worked as a staff scientist at the Max-Planck Institute from 1984-1990. In 1988 he went to the IMBB in Crete, Greece in connection with an Otto-Hahn-Fellowship of the Max-Planck-Society. He continued this position as an EC Senior Fellow in the framework of the Biotechnology programme until 1990, when he decided to leave the Max-Planck Institute and accepted the position of Principal Investigator (Associate Research Scientist) at the IMBB. In 1994 he was appointed an Associate Research Professor and in 2004 a Research Professor at the IMBB – the position he held at the time of his death.

While at IMBB, he continued working in the field of plant virology but also developed interest in antisense technologies. In the early 1990's he started working on hammerhead ribozymes and made substantial contributions to the understanding and applications of RNA catalysis. More recently he developed interest in the field of RNA interference and published several leading articles in the field.

Martin Tabler was an academic at heart. He had extensive teaching and research commitments at IMBB. However, despite his strenuous schedule he was still able to act as a reviewer for several major journals in the fields of biochemistry and molecular biology. In addition, he also served as a member of the editorial boards of *Nucleic Acids Research*, *Oligonucleotide* and *RNA Biology*.

It was also our great privilege that Martin agreed to act on editorial board of the *Journal of RNAi and Gene Silencing*. In particular I was grateful for his unlimited support, selfless encouragement and guidance in the early days of setting up the Journal – a difficult time for any new journal when such support is sporadic and meagre. It is a great loss that we will no longer be able to benefit from his expertise and support.

We dedicate the launch issue of the *Journal of RNAi and Gene Silencing* to the memory of Dr Martin Tabler.