Milestones in *Immunohematology* 1984–2009

D. Mallory

**The Beginning**

The recognition of a need for a journal that publishes peer-reviewed articles in the field of immunohematology was the first milestone in the history of the journal. The American Red Cross (ARC) Reference Laboratory Committee had been publishing the *Red Cell Free Press* for a number of years, and many of the articles were of excellent quality. However, they were not peer-reviewed, and the circulation of the newsletter was limited to ARC laboratory personnel.

In 1983, it was decided to change the *Red Cell Free Press* from a newsletter to a peer-reviewed publication with a new name. Here is a quote from the last editorial: “An expanded Editorial Board will look for and edit material from several disciplines closely related to Immunohematology and blood group serology—education, HLA, immunology and any area that we feel will be of interest to our readers.” It went on to tell the readers and authors of one of the missions that the journal would repeat often, i.e., “Our Editorial Board has agreed to assist you in writing the articles in an attempt to encourage more of you to experience the great satisfaction of this type of contribution.”

**Milestones**

1984

*Immunohematology, Journal of Blood Group Serology and Education,* was founded in 1984 to help encourage new manuscripts and authors, and help it did! Extensive literature reviews were published in each issue, starting in 1984, and they continued until 2002. The reviews were both diverse and topic specific. Two examples were survival of chromium 51–labeled cells and the Lutheran blood group system.

Two issues were published in 1984, six in 1985, and then the journal found its niche, becoming a quarterly publication in 1986.

1988

The permanent look of the journal came about more than 20 years ago, when the cover, contents, page, color, and basic layout came into being. There have been a few changes, but the “look” is basically the same.

1989–1990

A harder cover added to the new look and it was decided that a subscription fee needed to be charged for the first time. However, students would still receive free issues, and free issues would also be sent to any state blood bank meeting as requested. The editors also went to the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB) annual meeting that year and gave out issues at the ARC booth.

*Immunohematology* received contributions in support of publication of the journal, from Baxter Fenwal, Inc. in 1989, and from Abbott Diagnostics, who contributed for the next 3 years. Ortho Diagnostics Systems, Inc., made the first of 16 yearly donations to support the publication of *Immunohematology.*

1991

*Immunohematology* was selected by the FDA, ISBT, International Committee for Standardization in Haematology, and WHO for publication of the meeting report on monoclonal reagents, and the Excerpta Medica database (Embase) began continuous coverage of publication of the journal.

1992

It was a very special year for the subscribers! An article written by Geoff Daniels, PhD, had a table listing all the high-frequency red cell antigens and the effects of certain enzymes and chemicals on these antigens (Vol. 8, No. 2). This table was made into an 11 × 17-inch poster and was handed out at the AABB meeting that year. It was subsequently sent out to the subscribers. Not many journals would think to do this valuable service for their readers!

It was announced in this and all subsequent issues that the journal is published on acid-free paper. For your edification, it has been from the start.

1994—Happy 10th Anniversary!

*Immunohematology* celebrated by sending subscribers a gift of a cardboard holder for the issues, another unique idea for the reader.

The contents of the final issue that year were outstanding. All papers paid tribute to the Rh blood system, with an editorial by Peter Issitt, PhD, seven original papers, and one on the first example of the red-cell phenotype, Rh:-32.

On a more mundane level, but of great interest to the foreign subscribers, *Immunohematology* at last offered the service of subscription by Visa and Master Card.
1995

The editorial board had met at the end of October 1994 and made major decisions about the direction of the journal. To that end, the editors actively pursued papers concerning WBC and platelet serology. The final issue of 1995 was dedicated to these topics, with three reviews and six original papers.

1996–1997

Publication of Immunohematology was transferred from Rockville, Maryland, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The first of the “Those Were the Days” articles was published in 1996 (Vol. 12, No. 2), and they continued until 2000. Since that time, “There are many blood bankers who have retired from the field or who will retire in the not-too-distant future, who have some wonderful memories that should not be lost or forgotten.” Such shared memories become part of our history.

The Web site was announced with all of the features, including availability of past issues, searches by topic, subscribing on line, letters to the editor, information for authors, the editorial board, related home page sites, and—finally—the editor’s direct e-mail. It was introduced at the AABB meeting with demonstrations at the ARC booth!

Of note, the first paper on PCR technology was published.

2000–2003

Dr. Phillip Sturgeon, then 80 years old (Vol. 17, No. 4), tells of developing the first multichannel colorimetric recorder autoanalyzer for blood typing. The picture of Dr. Sturgeon with the autoanalyzer is from 1963. Dr. Garratty’s introduction is a must-read of any of the articles published. Dr. Sturgeon is an amazing man and an inspiration for all of us.

Immunohematology is now publishing papers on PCR/DNA, flow cytometry, and other advanced testing technology, and is keeping pace with the needs of the readers. Immucor, Inc. made a contribution to support the publication of the journal.

2004—Happy 20th Anniversary!

The four issues of 2004 contain 16 invited review papers, heralding a new direction for Immunohematology. Dr. Scott Murphy, who had become a senior medical editor in 2003, was a major factor in moving the journal toward the inclusion of more invited reviews.

In addition, the 2004 issues looked back at the 1984 issue, asking some of the original authors to comment. Two historically important articles from the Red Cell Free Press were republished, as were a poem and crossword puzzle.

Dr. S.G. Sandler, senior medical editor, medical editor, and founding medical director of Immunohematology, retired after 20 years, and Mary McGinniss, managing editor, retired after 19 years.

2005

In 2005, we received acceptance for citation by Index Medicus. This was a major milestone for Immunohematology and for the authors! In 2004, Dr. S.G. Sandler had agreed to apply for indexing and inclusion in Index Medicus. He took the application directly to the chairman and explained the purpose of the journal. It seemed that the reason we had not received acceptance in the past was that Index Medicus thought Immunohematology, Journal of Blood Group Serology and Education, was an immunology journal. Future and past authors can thank Dr. Sandler for this and many other contributions!

Ring in the new! Sandra Nance and Connie Westhoff took over as editors-in-chief. What a great start for the next 25 years.

A new format for presenting papers, Educational Forum, was introduced in 2007, which asks for “manuscript submissions that illustrate serologic and clinical case histories with a focus on the resolution process to include the progressive steps from the serology to clinical, from bench to bedside.” This new format brings the technologist and the clinician together in a better understanding of the patient and the environment that affects the immunohematologist.

The first issue of 2007 is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Scott Murphy, the senior medical editor, who lost a valiant and courageous battle with lymphoma. As a result of Dr. Murphy’s efforts, the journals from 2004 on would contain many more invited review articles. It is interesting to see a comparison of the content of the papers in the journal for the 20 years from 1988 through 2007. See Table 1.

Table 1. Content—20 years (1988–2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Published</th>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Invited Reviews</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988–1997</td>
<td>220 papers</td>
<td>180 (32 case reports)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998–2007</td>
<td>220 papers</td>
<td>159 (7 case reports)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*33 reviews in the four years between 2004 and 2007.

2008

The third issue is dedicated to Sandra Ellison, who also lost a courageous battle with cancer. Sandy was a founding editor and remained on the editorial board until 2006, the year before she died. She had great vision, intelligence, and energy, which she dedicated to Immunohematology as well as to life!

The Past and the Future

Past

There are several people who deserve special recognition for their unequalled contributions and support to Immunohematology. Mary McGinniss was the managing editor from 1986 until 2004 and still reviews articles and helps authors! She had retired from NIH and had a very successful career in immunohematology, having written many original papers, and thus was eager to take on the challenge of edi-
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tor. She is a superb editor and encouraged many new writers and authors with English as a second language. Her impact on the quality of the journal was unequaled and continues today.

Dr. Marion Reid was a member of the founders of and contributors to the Red Cell Free Press and was involved in and supported Immunohematology from the beginning. She has been on the editorial board, served as a reviewer, and contributed more papers than any other author. She is and always has been one of our most enthusiastic supporters.

Dr. S. Gerald Sandler was director at ARC National Headquarters when the idea was proposed to publish a peer-reviewed journal rather than a newsletter. He was always encouraging, always found the funds to support the publication, and always found a way when a way was needed. He edited every word of every issue of every volume from the beginning, 1984, until 2004. He wrote many articles then and now, is still a peer reviewer, and is on the editorial board. His policy has always been, “If you submit an abstract to a meeting, you will write a paper for publication.” (His staff got a lot of practice and often Immunohematology received a lot of articles submitted for consideration.) One of his finest contributions was the acceptance by Index Medicus for citation in 2005, including 8 years of back issues. Only Dr. Sandler could have done that! No other individual has had more impact on the quality or course of Immunohematology.

For 16 years Ortho Diagnostics Systems, Inc., contributed to the support of the publication of the third issue of each volume of Immunohematology. For years they distributed additional thousands of copies of the journal to their Bankers Club members in all parts of the world. It was a great show of support for education.

One also cannot forget the many people who made a difference in Immunohematology during the 25 years. Authors, staff, editors, reviewers, and financial supporters have worked for 25 years to bring the reader a unique and first-class publication. Of course, it is impossible to forget the readers who have continued to subscribe from 50 states and 21 countries, and are the raison d’être. Long may this continue to be the perfect combination!

Future

The journal’s editorial board never forgets the purpose and audience of the journal; it is and has been in the title. The editors and the editorial board are always looking for the “New, the True and the Interesting” for the readers and the authors. Therefore, on the 25th anniversary of Immunohematology, Journal of Blood Group Serology and Education, it is not at all difficult to predict that there will be many future milestones.

May the next 25 years be even better and may Immunohematology, Journal of Blood Group Serology and Education, always be the leader!

Delores Mallory, MT(ASCP)SBB
Emeritus Editorial Board

Attention: State Blood Bank Meeting Organizers

If you are planning a state meeting and would like copies of Immunohematology for distribution, please send request, 4 months in advance, to immuno@usa.redcross.org.