Matthew Howard Kaufman (1942–2013) [1]

By: Villarreal, Lance Keywords: Stem cells [2] Mouse development [3]

Matthew Kaufman was a professor of anatomy at the University of Edinburgh [4], in Edinburgh, UK, who specialized in mouse [5] anatomy, development, and embryology [6] during the late twentieth century. According to The Herald, he was the first, alongside his colleague Martin Evans, to isolate and culture embryonic stem cells [7]. Researchers initially called those cells Evans-Kaufman cells. In 1992, Kaufman published The Atlas of Mouse Development, a book that included photographs of mice and mouse organ development. Kaufman also wrote books about UK medical history, phrenology, or the study of craniums as an indicator of character or mental ability, and medical teaching in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Kaufman’s anatomical records and experiments in mouse [5] development contributed to genetic engineering, embryology [6], and anatomy.


In 1981, Kaufman and his colleague Martin Evans published an article titled “Establishment in Culture of Pluripotential Cells from Mouse Embryos” which details how they isolated embryonic cells from mice and created cell lines that other researchers could use for future experiments. Cell lines are populations of cells taken from a multicellular organism that researchers isolate in laboratory conditions to allow the population to persist and grow indefinitely. To find pluripotent cells, or cells that have the potential to develop into multiple different cell types, Kaufman dissected developing mice blastocysts, the cellular structures that eventually develop into mice embryos. Kaufman and Evans named the pluripotent cells they found inside the mice blastocysts Evans-Kaufman cells.


Kaufman was recognized by organizations including Royal Colleges and, in 2000, was made a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, both headquartered in Edinburgh, Scotland. Kaufman received the Jackson Laboratory award in 2006. In 2007, he retired from the University of Edinburgh [4] and became a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, headquartered in Edinburgh, Scotland.

On 11 August 2013, Kaufman died in St. Margaret’s Care Home in Edinburgh, Scotland, and, as of 2018, his wife Claire is still alive, along with their two sons Simon and David and grandchildren Angus and Georgia.

Sources

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