

Dr Geoffrey C. Schild, CBE

Dr Geoffrey Schild has followed a scientific career in virology and public health with a special interest in virology research, vaccines and the standardization and control of biologicals. From 1985 – 2002, he was Director of the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC) and a member of the National Biological Standards Board.

Commencing his scientific career at the University of Sheffield in 1960 – 1967 with research on influenza, polio and rhinoviruses, Dr Schild then joined the scientific staff of the medical Research Council in 1967. From 1969 – 1975 he served as Director of the World Health Organization, World Influenza Centre at the National Institute for Medical Research, Mill Hill. There, he was involved in antigenic analysis of influenza viruses, coordination of the scientific activities of the WHO Global Network on influenza surveillance and the development of international recommendations on the composition of influenza vaccines.

Up to 2001 he acted as chair of the WHO Expert International Committee on the composition of influenza vaccines and from 1986 – 1995, he served as Director of the MRC Directed Programme of Research aimed at the development of vaccines and antivirals for HIV.

As Director of NIBSC, Dr Schild had a key role in the development of the scientific basis for the quality and safety of biologicals and in international regulatory affairs. From 1986 – 1991, he was also Chairman of the EU Biotechnology/Pharmacy Working Party. He has been responsible for the development and provision of many key WHO International Standards and Reference materials used worldwide for quality control, safety and potency tests of bacterial and viral vaccines and other immunologicals. He has served on several UK government advisory committees and is a WHO consultant.

His achievements include the single-radical-immunodiffusion (SRID) assay for the hemagglutinin content of inactivated influenza vaccines now widely used internationally (Schild, Wood and Newman (1975) Bull. WHO, 52, 223-231) and the currently applied unified nomenclature system for influenza viruses based on the antigenic subtypes of hemagglutinin (H1 – H14) and neuraminidase (N1 – N9) (Schild, Newman and Webster (1980) Archives of Virology, 63, 171-184).

Currently, Dr Schild is Professional Affairs Officer and Member of Council of the UK Society for General Microbiology and is on the Council of the Royal Veterinary College and the Board of the UK Health Protection Agency. He is also a member of the Executive Board and Council of the International Association for Biologicals and is the acting Chair of the International Society of Influenza and other Virus Diseases (ISIRV).

He is a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences, Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (London), Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (Edinburgh), and Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists and the Institute of Biology.

Dr Schild was awarded the honour of Commander of the British Empire (CBE) by the Queen in 1993 for Services to Science and an Honorary Doctorate of Science by the University of Sheffield in 2002. Dr Schild has also published some 300 scientific and review articles mainly on applied and basic virology research.