Analysis of Human Genetic Data: A Celebratory Issue of *Human Heredity* Honoring Dr. Jurg Ott

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On June 4, 2009, Rockefeller University organized a scientific symposium to celebrate the 70th birthday of Dr. Jürg Ott. Numerous friends, students, trainees, and colleagues of Dr. Ott convened in New York for the celebration, which included presentations from some of his mentees and collaborators. This issue of *Human Heredity* is dedicated to Dr. Ott, who was *Human Heredity's* Editor-in-Chief from 1991 to 2004, and includes work related to the papers that were presented at the symposium in his honor.

Dr. Jürg Ott earned his PhD in zoology from the University of Zurich in 1967, taught physics at a state college in Switzerland and then worked as a biostatistician until 1970. He earned his master's degree in biomathematics from the University of Washington in Seattle in 1972 and stayed on at the university as a research assistant, post-doc, assistant professor and then associate professor. Dr. Ott returned to Zurich in 1979 as the assistant director for the city's statistics office. In 1986, he accepted two positions in New York City: Professor of Genetics and Development at Columbia University and research scientist and director of the Department of Statistics at the New York State Psychiatric Institute. Dr. Ott moved to Rockefeller University in 1996 as professor and head of the Laboratory of Statistical Genetics. He is currently Professor Emeritus at Rockefeller University in New York, and Visiting Professor at the Institute of Psychology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing.

Dr. Ott is a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Human Genome Organization. He received a Merit Award from the Na-

tional Institute of Mental Health in 2001, the Medal of Honor from the German Society for Human Genetics in 2007 (the society's highest award, which recognizes scientific achievements and significant contributions to the field of human genetics made by individual geneticists and outstanding personality), and the Ming Tsuang Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Society of Psychiatric Genetics in 2008. In 2010, he was awarded the prestigious Allan Award, the major award given by The American Society of Human Genetics, 'to recognize substantial and far-reaching scientific contributions to human genetics, carried out over a sustained period of scientific inquiry and productivity' (http://www.ashg.org/pages/awards_overview.shtml#allan).

Dr. Ott is a pioneer in the field of statistical genetic analysis and authored the first publicly accessible computer program on human linkage analysis (entitled LIPED). Dr. Ott has analyzed gene linkages for a number of disorders, including familial hypercholesterolemia, hypertension, macular degeneration, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, multiple sclerosis and retinitis pigmentosa. His work led to some of the first methods for computer simulation in family pedigrees and provided the statistical framework underlying newer approaches to haplotype relative risk methods that have become important tools in the search for disease-marker associations.

We are delighted to present this collection of papers in his honor. The variety of topics covered by these papers are a testament to the far-reaching influence that Dr. Jürg Ott's work has had, and will continue to have, in our field of research.