

NEWS

Farewell Steve and welcome Pat and Katie

Kathryn Knight

It's always tough saying goodbye to old friends but, after almost 14 years, Steve Perry from the University of Ottawa, Canada, is stepping down as an Editor of Journal of Experimental Biology. Reflecting on his time with the journal, Perry says, 'There have been so many amazing experiences; the annual JEB symposium has always been a highlight but most of all I enjoyed getting sneak previews of much of the great work being done in the field of comparative physiology'. Describing Perry's editorial style as 'stringent', Editor-in-Chief Hans Hoppeler, says, 'It was difficult to get a study past Steve if it was not completely "watertight". He was JEB's guarantee for high quality in hypothesis-driven physiological fish research'.

However, when Perry joined the journal in 2004, it was with mixed emotions. 'I was thrilled, surprised and obviously honoured to be considered as one of the Editors, but I was also sad to learn that the need to bring in a new Editor was a consequence of Bob Boutilier's [Editor-in-Chief 1994–2004] grave medical situation', he says, recalling how he became responsible for the peer review of all things aquatic, from acid–base regulation to stress and cardiovascular responses in fish and other species.



Steve Perry

Perry's passion for fish physiology was kindled as an undergraduate at Concordia University, Canada. Having conducted a year-long research project on the effects of heavy metals on fish osmoregulation, he was convinced that his future career would lie in the field of aquatic toxicology: 'Wow, was I ever wrong!' Perry chuckles. Following his instincts to the University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada, Perry embarked on his research career with Dave Randall, investigating acid–base

regulation and ion uptake in rainbow trout. 'My first JEB article was published in 1981 from work I did as a PhD student. I recall being encouraged by the advice we received from the Editor, John Treherne', says Perry. He then remained at UBC for a short postdoc before moving east for a second postdoc in Chris Wood's lab at McMaster University, Canada. 'Dave Randall taught me that the boundaries between science and art were blurred at best – for him, it was all about the ideas – while Chris Wood engrained in me the importance of generating high-quality data on an industrial scale', says Perry.

After Perry joined the University of Ottawa, Canada, as an Assistant Professor, he, Randall and Wood were reunited on the shores of Lake Magadi in Kenya, with Harold Bergman and Patricia (Pat) Wright to discover how the only fish that live in the lake, a tilapia species, excrete nitrogenous waste in the extremely alkaline water (pH 10). The question was inspired by Wright's PhD, when she studied ammonia and CO₂ excretion at the gills, and resulted in a Nature paper. Perry laughs, 'The data were collected under the most adverse conditions imaginable. I think it was during this study that the term "eyeballometric assay" was coined when our equipment (including our spectrophotometers) were impounded by Kenyan authorities'.

In 2013, Perry was appointed as Dean of the University of Ottawa Faculty of Science, overseeing a major expansion with the hiring of more than 45 new Professors and large-scale infrastructure investment. As he steps down from both his journal and faculty responsibilities in 2018, Perry admits that he is looking forward to getting stuck back into the lab. 'There's lots of exciting stuff going on, or just getting underway, right now including CRISPR-Cas9 knockout studies and optogenetic experiments. I'm particularly excited about our preliminary work aimed at establishing the cellular costs associated with moving salt across membranes and epithelia'.

Faced with an increased editorial load as manuscript submissions to JEB continue rising, Hoppeler has taken the opportunity not only to find a replacement for Perry but also to expand the Editorial team. He has invited Katie Gilmour from the University of Ottawa and Pat Wright from the University of Guelph – who participated in the Lake Magadi expedition with Perry – to join the journal and oversee peer review of fish physiology and other aspects of comparative physiology. 'Both are highly recognised international scientists', says Hoppeler.

Interestingly, both Gilmour and Wright credit Wood with inspiring their love of comparative physiology. 'It's all Chris Wood's fault', laughs Gilmour, who remembers his 4th year course in Environmental Physiology at McMaster; and Wright recalls working in his lab as an undergraduate researcher on ammonia excretion in fish.

After their undergraduate degrees, Wright headed west to UBC to work with Randall while Gilmour moved to the University of Cambridge, UK, where she joined Charlie Ellington's group to work on bumblebee flight muscle. During that time, Ellington was

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Pat Wright and Katie Gilmour

appointed as JEB Editor-in-Chief (1989–1994) and Gilmour recalls that the experience ‘opened my eyes to everything that happens behind the scenes at a journal’. Wright also recalls her first experience of the journal, when she published her first JEB paper in

1985 and she received a typed decision letter in the mail from Ellington’s predecessor, John Treherne.

More recently, Gilmour has been investigating the role of aquaporins as possible CO₂ channels and carbonic anhydrase in acid–base regulation, while Wright recently published the discovery that fish ‘feel’ gravity. ‘The study was 7 years in the making, led by a very talented graduate student, and involved five collaborators from three universities. It was great fun to share ideas and techniques with a diverse group of physiologists and biomechanics experts’, she says.

Considering the prospect of joining the Editorial team, Wright and Gilmour both declare that they are excited by the opportunity and will draw on previous experiences: Wright as an Editorial Board member of JEB and several other journals, and Gilmour as former Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Physiological and Biochemical Zoology* from 2009 to 2014. ‘It is daunting being asked to fill the shoes of Steve Perry’, says Wright, adding, ‘I am looking forward to reading lots of top science’; and Gilmour says, ‘JEB has always been special to me, from my time as a graduate student with Charlie Ellington. My first papers were published in JEB. It is an honour to be considered’.