In a study of 103 melanoma patients, autoantibodies were found directed against either cell surface membranes or cytoplasmic contents. The antibodies were most often seen in the early stages of disease, but also reappeared in two individuals with metastases following autoimmunization with tumor-cell preparations. The first two obstacles were overcome by recruiting to our team one of the most experienced surgeons in the field of melanoma research anywhere, the late Dennis Bodenham of Frenchay Hospital, Bristol, by the cooperation of numerous colleagues in the London area, and by the great efforts of members of Mulago Hospital, Kampala, who arranged to send regular shipments of tumor biopsies and serum from patients in Uganda. This meant that members of the group had to meet planes arriving from Entebbe and trains from Bristol at all hours of the day and night. Since we were not certain of the effect of storage on the specimens at that stage, the assays were performed immediately on their arrival, often resulting in the laboratory personnel and the investigators working somewhat irregular and unusual hours! The final problem of the variety of assays was solved by the composition of the research team. We were particularly fortunate to have two visiting professors, Rufus Ikonopisov from Bulgaria, and Richie Nairn from Melbourne, who, working with Terry Phillips and me, developed some unique approaches to the identification of tumor-specific and tumor-associated antimelanoma antibodies.

I believe the frequency with which this publication has been cited over the ensuing years is largely due to this close collaboration of individuals, each of whom brought to the project his own special skills and enthusiasm. The work resulted in one of the first detailed studies of humoral immunity in a human tumor system and introduced the feasibility of sequential investigations using relatively simple methods. This has resulted in a large number of similar works, and, in some cases, more sophisticated studies, not only in melanoma but many other human tumors.

Since this publication, three of my co-workers have died, Bodenham, Ikonopisov, and Hamilton Fairley, the latter killed in London by a terrorist bomb meant for someone else. I would like to dedicate this Citation Classic to their memories.