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## Preface

If there is one aspect of current cancer research that represents a major challenge in both novice and experienced researchers, it is the rapid advance in our understanding of the disease. Researchers can be required to switch from analysis of gene expression to kinetics of protein activation, from genetic studies to the analysis of protein function. Cancers are highly complex disease systems and researchers aiming to understand the functioning of cancer systems require access to a wide range of laboratory techniques from a broad range of research disciplines. Increasingly, however, published methods are incomplete or refer back to a series of previous publications each containing only a small part of the complete protocol. The aim of *Ovarian Cancer: Methods and Protocols* is to provide for ovarian cancer researchers in the first instance, a laboratory handbook that will facilitate research into cancer systems by providing a series of expert protocols, with proven efficacy, across a broad range of technical expertise. Thus, there are sections on tumor genetics and cellular signal transduction, as well as sections on apoptosis and RNA analysis.

The value of *Ovarian Cancer: Methods and Protocols* to the ovarian cancer researcher will, I trust, be considerably enhanced by (1) the provision of a series of overviews relating to the biology, diagnosis, and treatment of this important neoplasm, and (2) the provision of a series of technical overviews introducing each part that provides an expert review of the applications and pitfalls of the various techniques included.

*Ovarian Cancer: Methods and Protocols* aims to provide a resource for both the novice scientist/clinician coming to grips with laboratory-based research for the first time, as well as for those more experienced investigators seeking to diversify their technological base. Often, we are constrained less by our ideas than by our abilities to carry forward those ideas using different technologies.

No volume can exhaustively cover every aspect of biological research, and there will be gaps that one or another research group will identify. Each section could readily be expanded (and in some cases has been) into a book in its own right. However, I have sought to include a spectrum of techniques that will allow the acquisition of key skills in each area covered. The aim is to give the researcher an understanding of the technical issues covered in each section such that they can then extrapolate their expertise into salient techniques in these areas.

As with all volumes in the *Methods in Molecular Medicine* series, clear instructions in the performance of the various protocols is supplemented by additional technical notes that provide valuable insights into the working of the technique in question. Though often brief, these notes provide essential details that allow a successful outcome.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed to this volume, who have been patient over the period required to collate their contribu-

tions. I am also grateful to Professor John Walker for his encouragement and guidance as series editor. Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Dorothy for patiently proof reading manuscripts and for being understanding on the many occasions when I arrived home late during the preparation of this volume.

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