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# Preface

In the last 10 years researchers have firmly established key roles for Ras-related GTPases in almost every aspect of cell biology. In the 1980s the proto-oncogene Ras itself was the focus of interest, though in the 1990s this shifted to the increasing variety of Ras-related proteins. In this new decade much yet needs to be done to establish the role for all the small GTPases now uncovered by the human genome project. In particular, these GTPases need to be understood in the appropriate biochemical and cellular contexts. In the process of trying to uncover the role of these versatile proteins, a variety of novel techniques and methodologies has been developed. These now enable investigators to move easily within a diversity of fields ranging from structural studies to real-time in vivo analysis of a GTPase.

In recognition of the need for access to key background methodologies, *GTPase Protocols: The Ras Superfamily* is devoted to techniques that are presently widely used and that will continue to be the standard for researchers worldwide. Each chapter is aimed at supplying detailed methodologies to allow reproduction in any laboratory, while also providing the general principles on which the methods are based. Some of the techniques grouped in the first section apply broadly to small GTPases, whereas others in Part II are more applicable within each GTPase subfamily.

We would like to thank the many authors who have spent time in sharing their expertise. It is hoped that *GTPase Protocols: The Ras Superfamily* will bring access to and understanding of these remarkable proteins for all those embarking on new studies.

*Ed Manser*  
*Tom Leung*



<http://www.springer.com/978-0-89603-934-6>

GTPase Protocols

The Ras Superfamily

Manser, E.; Leung, Th. (Eds.)

2002, XI, 267 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-0-89603-934-6

A product of Humana Press