

2025

Scott Pomeroy

Class of 1971

Physician Scientist, Child Neurologist, Professor and Department Chair

Scott Pomeroy is a child neurologist and research scientist, the Bronson Crothers Professor of Neurology of Harvard Medical School and for nearly 2 decades Chair of the Department of Neurology of Boston Children's Hospital. He has provided clinical care for children with brain tumors for 35 years and leads an internationally recognized research laboratory that has defined the molecular basis of embryonal brain tumors, a malignant brain cancer that occurs almost exclusively in children.

Background and Education

Scott graduated from WHS in 1971. He participated in many activities in high school including Drama Club, Choir, the Black History Club, cross country and track. In the summer of 1969 he traveled to England, France and Italy with an AIFS study group led by Mrs. Marie King Johnson. He served as a member of the Wyoming Fire Department Salvage Squad and worked on the summer work crew for the City of Wyoming.

He graduated from Miami University (B.A. in Chemistry and Zoology, summa cum laude) and received M.D. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Cincinnati. While at UC College of Medicine, he successfully advocated for the establishment of a formal M.D., Ph.D. training program and served on the committees to establish the program that continues to the present. He completed residencies in Pediatrics and Child Neurology respectively at Boston Children's Hospital and Washington University in St. Louis, and a post-doctoral research fellowship in the laboratory of Dale Purves in the Wash U Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology.

Career

Scott joined the faculty of Washington University School of Medicine in 1989. He was recruited back to Boston in 1991 to join the Department of Neurology of Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. In Boston, his clinical focus turned to childhood brain tumors, a deadly form of cancer and the leading cause of childhood cancer related deaths in the United States. There had been relatively little progress in understanding the biology of these cancers, creating a compelling opportunity to define a new direction of research for this important disease. Facing high rates of death of his patients and neurological disability of survivors, Scott worked with colleagues to establish a multidisciplinary brain tumor program at Boston Children's Hospital and Dana Farber Cancer Institute. The program quickly became one of the leading childhood brain tumor centers in the country. He was awarded the inaugural Compassionate Caregiver Award of the Kenneth Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare in 1999.

His research program has been funded by the NIH for more than 35 years. Using innovative molecular technologies, the lab has sought to discover why certain malignant brain tumors occur only in children, implying a sensitivity of cells of the developing brain to form cancers that is lost in maturity.

Collaborating with scientists at Massachusetts Institute of Technology he identified molecules defining the developmental origin of the tumors, published in several high profile journals including a landmark 2002 paper in the journal Nature. Serving as chair of Central Nervous System Biology committees of national cancer consortia including the Pediatric Oncology Group, the Children's Oncology Group and others, he created a national program to collect tumor tissue from hundreds of institutions. These samples were used to establish a molecular classification of childhood brain tumors, validated through collaboration with groups in North America and Europe. The classification was accepted as the world standard by the World Health Organization in 2016, and now is used for tumor diagnosis and risk stratification in clinical trials throughout the world.

In 2005, Scott was selected through a national search to become Chair of the Department of Neurology of Boston Children's Hospital. As chair, he has fostered the development and integration of world-class research and clinical programs. US News ranked the Department together with Neurosurgery as the #1 neuroscience program in the nation for 16 consecutive years.

Awards and Recognition

Scott has more than 200 publications, cited more than 90,000 times. He has many awards including the Sidney Carter Award of the American Academy of Neurology, the Bernard Sachs Award of the Child Neurology Society and the Daniel Drake Medal of the University of Cincinnati, the highest award for an alumnus of the College of Medicine. In 2017, he was elected to the National Academy of Medicine (NAM). As a member of the Committee on Childhood Cancer and Disabilities, he co-authored a NAM publication to advise the Social Security Administration on disabilities of cancer survivors. He is an editor of The Netter Collection of Medical Illustrations: Nervous System and of Neurology in Clinical Practice, one of the top textbooks in the field of Neurology.

Personal

Scott is married to Marie Stewart (WHS 1971), and his siblings are all WHS graduates, including Paul (1969), Mark (1975) and Carolyn (1977). He and Marie enjoy outdoor activities including hiking and kayaking, travel and photography, and spend much time devoted to their 5 children and 9 grandchildren who live in Colorado, Maryland, South Carolina and Massachusetts.