

# THE PRACTICAL BIOINFORMATICIAN

Edited by

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## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the memory of Dr. G. Christian Overton, a pioneer in the field of bioinformatics and a researcher with unparalleled vision for the use of computational approaches to solve biological problems.

Dr. Overton received his Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics and physics from the University of New Mexico in 1971 and his Ph.D. in biophysics from the Johns Hopkins University in 1978. He then did a postdoc with Dr. Davor Solter at the Wistar Institute, during which time he became increasingly drawn to computers, and in particular to the promise of artificial intelligence. He therefore returned to school part-time, and took a Master's degree in Computer and Information Science at the University of Pennsylvania. After receiving this degree in 1986, he briefly left academia to work for Burroughs (later to become Unisys) and returned to the University of Pennsylvania in 1991 to lead the informatics component of the Center for Chromosome 22, a collaboration between researchers at the University of Pennsylvania, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and other local institutions. During this time, he developed strong ties with researchers in computer science, statistics and biology. These collaborations eventually led in 1997 to the establishment of the Center for Bioinformatics at the University of Pennsylvania, of which Dr. Overton was the founding Director. The Center for Bioinformatics is an interdisciplinary venture between the Schools of Medicine, Arts and Sciences, and Engineering and Applied Science.

Dr. Overton was an Associate Professor in the Department of Genetics, and held a secondary appointment in the Department of Computer and Information Science. Dr. Overton's unique training in biophysics, developmental biology and computer science, and his deep understanding of biomedical and computational problems, enabled him to establish many exciting research projects, effectively bridging the gap between collaborators in numerous fields. Dr. Overton's own research interests focused on problems associated with database integration, genome annotation, gene prediction, and the recognition of regulatory elements within the sea of nucleotides that comprise the human genome. Through his use of advanced computational techniques to help in the construction of genomic databases, Dr.

Overton also gained considerable recognition in computer science. In addition to his research, Dr. Overton was an Editor for the *Journal of Computational Biology*, *Bioinformatics*, and *Gene/Gene-COMBIS*, as well as a Member of the Board of Directors for the International Society for Computational Biology.

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