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Jim Smiley is well known for his contributions over many years to diverse aspects of herpes simplex virus biology, including viral genome isomerization, cleavage and packaging, promoter structure and regulation, regulation of viral and host mRNA stability and translation, and viral modulation of host innate immune responses and signaling pathways. Born in Montreal, Canada, he obtained his B.Sc. in genetics from McGill University in 1972 and then pursued graduate research at McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada studying the transcription program of adenovirus type 12. Following his Ph.D. he undertook postdoctoral research at Yale University in the labs of Drs. Frank H. Ruddle and William C. Summers (1977-1979), where he was introduced to HSV. He then joined the faculty of the Cancer Research Group (CRG) at McMaster, directed by the noted HSV virologist William C. Rawls (1979). The CRG was a major center for virology research in Canada, and Jim assumed its leadership in 1990. He moved to the University of Alberta in Edmonton in 1997 to become Chair of the newly formed Department of Medical Microbiology and Immunology. Jim stepped down as departmental Chair in 2002, and is currently Professor and Tier I Canada Research Chair in Molecular Virology in the Li Ka Shing Institute of Virology at the University of Alberta.