

# Preface

The first edition of this book was published in 1982; the object was to produce a succinct summary of biochemistry with numerous illustrations, providing an introduction to biochemistry in an easily assimilable form. In the following two editions we included additional text while retaining the organization of the subject matter. The fourth edition represented a major change in layout and organization, providing a much more continuous text while retaining the high proportion of illustrations. The most important change was the introduction of elements of gene structure and function at an early stage, immediately after a chapter on amino acids and proteins, because these concepts should permeate all aspects of modern biochemistry. In the final chapter, we briefly outlined some topics that we thought likely to be of particular significance in the future.

For this fifth edition we have carefully revisited the text and the figures and edited down some of the more detailed biochemistry. The original authors are very pleased to welcome Timothy Peters, a distinguished Clinical Biochemist, as a third author. He has helped to include many more examples of clinical relevance. Our restructuring for the fourth edition has borne fruit, as the impact of the human genome project has become increasingly apparent in what has become known as the 'post-genomic' era of biological and medical research. A knowledge of the structure of the human genome – and influence of the environment on its expression – will surely come to permeate and possibly dominate all aspects of current and future medical practice. The text has been revised to enlarge on this important area.

All the text provides a foundation to a study of medicine; paragraphs that have a particular relevance to the clinic are highlighted with a 'Clinical Implications' heading. This edition should be of benefit not only to medical students but also postgraduates in clinical biochemistry and for those requiring knowledge of the biochemical basis of their medical specialties. Science students should enjoy the medical bias while accepting that the text provides a sound introduction to biochemistry and molecular biology.

We are most grateful for suggestions from those who have been engaged in producing the many foreign language editions and for the careful attention of Hannah Kenner of Elsevier and the Commissioning Editor, Timothy Horne, for his guidance.

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