# Preface

I wrote this book both for the student learning genetics for the first time and for the biologist or health professional looking for background information. *Fundamental Genetics* is a brief account of the basic facts, theories, and experimental approaches of genetics. The book is unconventional. The organizing principle is to progress from structure to function, from simple to complex, and from molecular events to epiphenomena, such as how genes are inherited from parent to child. The history of genetics is scrupulously avoided, mainly to save space but also to avoid the trap of genuflecting to famous geneticists rather than discussing their experiments in the detail necessary for a full understanding – such a discussion, properly done, would fill several large volumes. This is a short book, and each chapter is focused.

A friend of mine says, "It's not how long life is that matters, but how thick." The chapters of *Fundamental Genetics* are short but thick, so if you are a student using the book as a text, it is probably best to read one and only one chapter at a sitting – any less, and you will have trouble getting the whole picture of the chapter; any more, and you will have mental indigestion. If you are using the book as a reference, the glossary may often be a helpful starting point. The teacher who chooses *Fundamental Genetics* as a textbook can skip chapters that are not appropriate for the course; it will be easy to use the chapters in a different order. The chapters are modules.

I have tried hard to be accurate and correct in writing this book, but it will contain mistakes. If you find a mistake, dear reader, or if you disagree with something in the book, or if some point seems opaque to you, contact me. I guarantee that I will answer any legitimate email inquiry.