John H. Kersey, M.D.

John H. Kersey, M.D., leader of the medical team that performed the world’s first bone marrow transplant for lymphoma, died on March 10 at the age of 74. He had been a member of the AACR since 1975.

Born on April 22, 1938, Kersey received his undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H., in 1956, and his medical degree from the University of Minnesota Medical School in Minneapolis in 1960. He was professor at the University of Minnesota, founding director of the university’s Masonic Cancer Center and former director of the university’s Blood and Marrow Transplant Program.

In 1975, Kersey and his colleagues at the University of Minnesota performed an experimental bone marrow transplant on a 16-year-old patient with Birkitt’s lymphoma, a rare and fatal form of cancer. This first patient is still alive today.

Kersey was associate editor of AACR’s journal, Cancer Research, and a member of the 1999 Joseph H. Burchenal AACR Award Committee. In addition, he is a past president of the American Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation and the International Society for Experimental Hematology.