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Jim Dabrowiak's Ph. D. thesis research (preceptor, D. W. Cooke, Western Michigan University, 1965-70) was on the synthesis and characterization of cobalt-amino acid complexes and his post doctoral work (mentor, D. H. Busch, The Ohio State University, 1970-72) focused on the synthesis and properties of iron-macrocyclic complexes as models for the naturally occurring molecules, hemoglobin and myoglobin.

During the early part of his academic career at Syracuse University, Jim synthesized manganese complexes as models for photosynthesis, studied a variety of metal-drug interactions, and characterized metal complexes of the anticancer drug, bleomycin. His later research focused on the synthesis and mechanistic studies on platinum anticancer drugs which resulted in numerous publications on the mechanism of action and cytotoxicity of platinum antitumor agents in cells and animal models. Jim's research group also pioneered in the development of quantitative footprinting analysis for studying the sequence specificity of drugs interacting with natural forms of DNA and RNA.

During his career, Jim served as a consultant to Bristol Myers Squibb when the platinum drugs were being developed and later as an expert consultant to various legal firms on the chemistry of platinum antitumor agents. In 1985 he was an American Cancer Society Scholar studying at the Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry in Göttingen, Germany and at Roswell Park Memorial Institute in Buffalo, New York.

Jim has ~130 peer reviewed publications and he has given ~220 scientific lectures and presentations at national and international meetings, academic institutions, research institutes, and companies.