

**South Florida**

# Sun-Sentinel

Monday, December 5th, 2016



JOE CAVARETTA/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Priscilla Guimaraes works in the DNA lab of Ocean Ridge Biosciences in Deerfield Beach. The lab expanded from a site in Palm Beach Gardens.

## Bioscience lab expands to 5,400-square-foot facility

Research company specializes in biotechnology

**BY MARCIA HEROUX POUNDS**  
Staff writer

Ocean Ridge Biosciences is a survivor in South Florida's fledgling biotech industry.

In the past decade, Ocean Ridge has worked with more than 200 academic labs and companies, providing gene-based lab analysis of blood and tissue samples for the development of new drugs and diagnostic tests.

Now, it has expanded, moving from a 1,875-square-foot site in Palm Beach Gardens to a new 5,400-square-foot contract research lab in Deerfield Beach.

But the road hasn't been easy.

Ocean Ridge founder and scientist David Willoughby grew up in South Florida, left to

pursue his studies and returned to the region in the early 2000s, as Scripps Florida was getting ready to open its research institute in Jupiter. There was promise of a burgeoning biotech sector in South Florida, and he wanted to be a part of it.

With the help of A. Donny Strosberg, Scripps Florida scientist and professor of infectology, Willoughby started Ocean Ridge. Then in 2012, Strosberg died of a heart attack at age 67.

His widow, Eliane Strosberg, remains a partner in Ocean Ridge. "[David] was one of Donny's favorites," said Strosberg, who said her husband was an investor in numerous startups all over the world.

Eliane Strosberg initially kept the investment in Ocean Ridge for sentimental reasons,

she said, but in the past few years, the research lab "really seems to be taking off in a very spectacular and grand way. I'm beginning to think this is going to be one of the very best investments."

She said Willoughby has been persistent in pursuing his business ideas and is "a very prudent man. He doesn't spend money he doesn't have."

Willoughby, 50, was inspired to study science by his Fort Lauderdale high school teacher. He left the region, eventually doing post-doctoral studies in molecular biology at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and what is now the Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute in La Jolla, Calif.