

Preface

Tetrahedron Prize for Creativity in Organic Chemistry

The Executive Board of Editors for Tetrahedron Publications and Elsevier Ltd. have already announced that the Tetrahedron Prize in 2004 has been awarded to Professor Koji Nakanishi (Columbia University). This special issue of *Bioorganic & Medicinal Chemistry* is dedicated to Professor Nakanishi for his pioneering research in natural products chemistry, especially in the use of spectroscopic and chemical methods in determining the chemical structure of natural products. His research has led to the characterization of over 200 bioactive compounds, many of which are endogenous and/or the first member of a new class. In addition, his recent studies with retinal analogs and retinal proteins have made seminal contributions in understanding the structural and mechanistic basis of animal vision and phototaxis. Professor Nakanishi's seminal contributions in natural products chemistry have not only shaped the development of this major field in chemistry, but also have had a profound impact on the way organic chemists approach drug discovery and development.

In this special issue entitled 'Chemistry and Biology of Natural Products,' we start with a short biographical sketch of Professor Nakanishi. Next is Professor Nakanishi's reflection on ginkgolides, a project that he start-

ed more than 40 years ago, and an outline of his current work. Finally, we include the important contributions of other authors. Articles appearing in this issue were invited from distinguished scientists who have a personal connection with the prizewinner or with his field of study. The subjects covered include the synthesis, structural analysis, and functional study of natural products, their analogs and mimetics, as well as designed molecules created by those who are inspired by the architecture of natural products, a theme reflecting the wide scope and impact of Professor Nakanishi's creative contributions.

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