

ANNIVERSARIES AND DATES



IVARS KALVINSH – 60

On June 2, 2007, Prof. Ivars Kalvinsh, Academician of the Academy of Sciences of Latvia and Director of the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis, celebrates his 60th birthday. His achievements in the field of the synthesis of nitrogen-containing heterocycles, in the creation of new drugs, and in the development of original technical solutions are well known not only to Latvian scientists. People cannot be indifferent to the outstanding personality and erudition of Prof. I. Kalvinsh in a wide range of natural sciences; they are either captivated and support his wildest ideas or reject them. However, time as a rule demonstrates the relevance of these ideas, which are in most cases soon indisputably confirmed by experiments and facts.

Scientists do not perceive the passing of the years. Just as imperceptible is the experience we gain and the depth of our knowledge. However, only the chosen earn the respect of professionals and society. Among them is the chemist Ivars Kalvinsh. Evidence of this is provided by his numerous awards. I. Kalvinsh is a full member of the Academy of Sciences of Latvia (1994) and an honorary member of the Ukrainian Medicinal and Stomatological Academy (2006). In 1988 Kalvinsh and his colleagues were awarded the State Prize of the Latvian SSR for a research cycle on the synthesis and application of the immunomodulator leakadine. He received the named medals for his contribution to the creation of medicinal products: D. H. Grindel (1996); S. A. Hiller (1997); and O. Schmiedeberg (2001). In 2003 he received the Gustavs Vanags Prize of the Academy of Sciences of Latvia for a cycle of publications on "The synthesis and investigation of bioactive low-molecular NO inductors and donors". That same year Kalvinsh was awarded the Paul Walden medal for his

outstanding contribution to the development of medicinal chemistry in Latvia and for a series of studies in the search for new medicines. In 2004 he received the St. George's Medal of the Ukraine for successful collaboration between the Ukraine and Latvia, and for a research cycle on the "Synthesis, development, and introduction into practice of mildronate – a novel cytoprotector with an original mechanism of action". In 2005 he became the first recipient of the Academician Solomon Aronovich Hiller Prize of the Academy of Sciences of Latvia, awarded for outstanding contribution to biomedicine and the design of new drugs. In 2006 Ivars Kalvinsh received the highest award of his country – the Order of Three Stars and the Prize of the Cabinet of Ministers of Latvia.

The activities and endeavors of Ivars Kalvinsh can be appreciated today just like 30 years ago. His first organic chemistry teacher, associate professor Valdis Oškāja, knew how to instil in his students a life-long interest in organic chemistry. Among them was the young organic chemist Ivars Kalvinsh. His first scientific work at the Institute of Organic Synthesis under the leadership of A. V. Eremeev was devoted to the study of small heterocycles – aziridines – and concluded with the presentation of a Candidate's Thesis on "Investigations of methods for the synthesis of functionally substituted 1H- and 1-aminoaziridines".

His attention was soon attracted by medicinal chemistry, where his ability to generate new ideas was able to develop most strikingly.

In 1979-1980, after post-graduate study, Kalvinsh was lucky enough to work abroad on probation. He spent 10 fruitful months in Prof. Huisgen's group and returned to Riga with a multitude of ideas.

His talents as scientist, administrator, and teacher became apparent in the development of the direction of medicinal chemistry in Riga. Thus, if in 1977 Kalvinsh was leader of a group consisting of two people, the Department of Medicinal Chemistry now headed by him numbers more than 80 scientists and students. A group of talented scientists (doctors of science in various fields of medicinal chemistry) works under the guidance of Prof. I. Kalvinsh. They include chemists Valerjans Kauss, Einārs Loža, Edgars Sūna, Osvalds Pugovičs, and Pēteris Trapencieris, biochemist Nikolajs Sjakste, and pharmacologists Maija Dambrova and Irina Shestakova. The lecture course in medicinal chemistry which Prof. Kalvinsh started 10 years ago, is constantly being improved and attracts full auditoriums at Latvian universities.

The desire to better understand the complex mechanisms of living nature gives no rest to Academician Kalvinsh to this day. The most important thing for an organic chemist is to understand the mechanisms of reactions, and for a medicinal chemist it is to understand the mechanism of the action of a drug. The study and improvement of synthetic medicinal preparations is, therefore, never-ending. Investigations continue both in the chemistry of aziridines (in particular, the search for analogues of the antitumor immunomodulator lecadine) and in the chemistry of betaines (in particular, the search for analogues of the cytoprotector mildronate).

The scientific-management activities of I. Kalvinsh are not limited solely to his administrative work as director of the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis. As head of the institute in 2004, after previous directors of the Institute of Organic Synthesis – Solomon Hiller, Gunārs Čipēns, and Edmunds Lukevics – Ivars Kalvinsh adopted all the best from his predecessors and paid great attention to the development of new investigations and the improvement of experimental practise. His aim was to develop the Institute in a united Europe. Important duties for Kalvinsh outside the Institute of Organic Synthesis are his work in the Senate of the Academy of Sciences of Latvia (since 1994), work on the editorial boards of the journals *Latvian Journal of Chemistry* (since 1996), *Proceedings of the Estonian Academy of Sciences* (since 1998), and *Molecules* (since 2003), and work in the council of the pharmaceutical company Olainfarm (since 2003).

Professor Ivars Kalvinsh has authored more than 900 scientific publications, including about 500 inventor's certificates and patents. In 2005 the inventor's great work was marked by the diploma and medal of the *World Intellectual Property Organisation*.

It will be easier to present the scientific interests of Kalvinsh to the reader by listing the scientific projects financed by the Latvian Science Council, led since 2005 by I. Kalvinsh: "Stereoselective synthesis of aryl-, alkynyl-, and alkenylcyclohexylamines and their application"; "Synthesis of functional indoles and their

development as new nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory agents"; "Synthetic analogs of natural inhibitors of zinc-containing metalloproteinase"; "Original drugs and bioregulators: design, shipping forms, and mechanism of their action".

Ivars is the loving father of two daughters, the indulgent grandfather of four grandchildren. In his younger years his interests outside chemistry were family, gardening, music, and fishing. Nowadays they are family, gardening, and the church. These interests help Ivars toward a better understanding of those around him without lowering his standards of perfection toward people while curbing his personal maximalism.

Ivars has been my mentor, teacher, friend, and colleague for 32 years. My wish for Ivars on my own behalf and on behalf of the entire Department of Medicinal Chemistry: may you never tire of your own ideas, may you remain decisive in their realization, and may you have good health and happiness for many years to come. And also... may you "catch the big one"... Good luck!

**Peteris Trapencieris, Corresponding Member,
Latvian Academy of Sciences, *Dr. Chem.***

The editorial staff of the Journal warmly congratulates our colleague and author on this glorious day. We wish him many new and creative achievements, much health, happiness and success. May he always have the support of his colleagues, companions and friends, the love of dear ones, integrity, and happiness.