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Nucleosides, Nucleotides and Nucleic Acids

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713597286>

Introduction

Online publication date: 24 November 2003

To cite this Article (2003) 'Introduction', Nucleosides, Nucleotides and Nucleic Acids, 22: 12, ix — x

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1081/NCN-120027305

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1081/NCN-120027305>

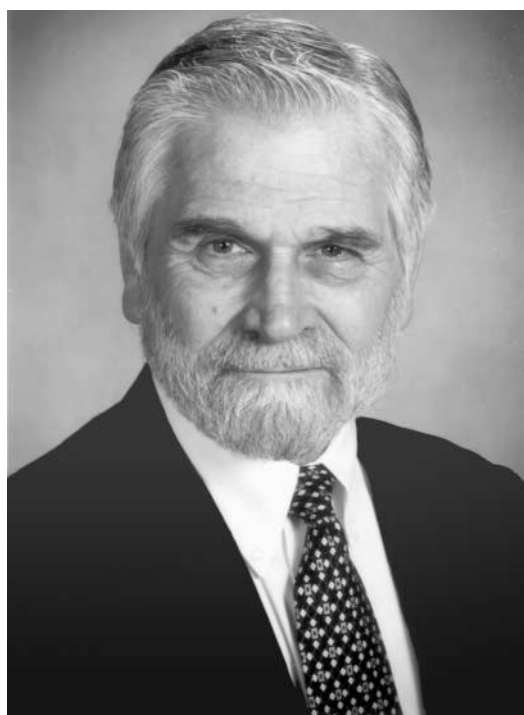
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Introduction



Leroy B. Townsend

There are a number of papers in this issue of *Nucleosides, Nucleotides, and Nucleic Acids* dedicated to Professor Leroy B. Townsend in celebration of his 70th birthday on December 20, 2003. The large response for manuscripts from Leroy's colleagues and friends has meant that we will publish contributions over several issues of the journal. Both the final issue of 2003 and the first and second issues of

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DOI: 10.1081/NCN-120027305
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1525-7770 (Print); 1532-2335 (Online)
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2004 will be solely dedicated to Leroy. In addition, the first issue of 2004 will contain a more complete description of his life and career.

Leroy has had a long and distinguished career as a heterocyclic and nucleoside chemist. But in writing this tribute, I fear I define his interests and knowledge too narrowly. Based on over 20 years of friendship and collaboration, I have long realized that he is very knowledgeable in many aspects of biology, biochemistry, and most recently virology. In fact, it is his ability to quickly learn and apply biological principles that has led to the design and synthesis of many new and unique compounds. His broad scientific interests in these areas are reflected in the papers by his students, post-doctoral fellows, and colleagues in this and the next issue of the journal dedicated to him.

It is not my intention in these comments to list all of his scientific and professional accomplishments, but I would be remiss if I did not summarize some of them. Leroy, his students, and collaborators have published nearly 500 papers since his first publication in 1962 with his mentor R.K. Robins. All of them have reported sound efforts in synthetic organic chemistry with many applied to problems in infectious diseases and cancer. He has been active and conscientious in transferring technology developed in his laboratories as reflected by his inventorship on more than 70 patents. In addition to his very active research program, he has been no less dedicated to the field of Medicinal Chemistry. He has held virtually every office in the American Chemical Society Division of Medicinal Chemistry. He was the founder or co-founder of scientific societies, the author and editor of book series, editorial board member for numerous journals, and study section chair or member for more organizations than I knew existed. For this work he has received numerous awards including honorary degrees.

In a career filled with numerous accomplishments, I know that Leroy takes the most joy and pride in his family and in his relationships with his students and colleagues. He is a devoted husband, father, and grandfather to his family and an outstanding mentor and friend to his many students. He takes great pleasure in seeing his students' accomplishments, some of which are presented in this issue of the journal.

Happy birthday, my friend! Keep up the great work.

*John C. Drach
Ann Arbor, Michigan
September 2003*