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## Editorial



### Professor Otto Richard Gottlieb

Professor Otto Gottlieb's name is synonymous with the study of Amazonian and Brazilian plant biodiversity, and the special issues of *Phytochemistry* are in recognition of his outstanding, multifarious and manifold contributions. Indeed, the response of papers in honor of the celebration of his 80th birthday was so overwhelming that two, and not one, issues of *Phytochemistry* have been dedicated to him; the Editors thank the various contributors from throughout the world for their articles in these Festschrift issues. The sampling of the papers from Brazilian colleagues illustrates some of the range of Brazilian plant biodiversity and the natural products therefrom.

Very early in his career, Professor Otto became fascinated by the diversity of the chemical composition of the flora of Brazil. In this respect, he pioneered the introduction of phytochemistry in Brazil, founded many research groups, and supervised directly 119 MSc and PhD theses in several Brazilian universities and research institutions. Additionally, he had a tremendous influence on the placement of organic chemists and phytochemists in Brazilian universities and research institutes, and many of his former students were drawn to his program from countries such as Columbia, Costa Rica, Israel, Mexico, Portugal and Thailand.

Perhaps one of the most significant aspects of his diverse phytochemical interests includes the establishment of an interdisciplinary chemobiology program aimed to rationalize plant evolution, systematics and ecology, with the goal of understanding the patterns and laws of nature. Indeed, these studies spawned the recognition of evolutionary canalization (biosynthetic contraction in flowering plants between the shikimate

and acetate pathways, and the development of allied fields such as micromolecular systematics and micromolecular ecology.

Professor Otto is a great promoter of science, and attending his courses and lectures is a lively and wonderful experience. Enthusiastically, but with a sense of urgency, he challenges his audiences (typically scientists) to understand the mechanisms of nature, which are of essential importance for the future of life on planet Earth, particularly in the last biological frontier (Brazil). In this regard, he also initiated the highly successful Annual Meeting on Micromolecular Evolution, Systematics and Ecology, and these have taken place regularly since 1978.

Professor Otto was born in Brno, Czechoslovakia, on 31 August 1920, and moved to Brazil from Europe during the Second World War years. With a degree initially in Industrial Chemistry from the University of Brazil in 1945, he was subsequently engaged in his father's Brazilian essential oils industry; however, his fascination with phytochemistry next took him to the Institute of Agricultural Chemistry in Rio de Janeiro where he served from 1955 to 1963. Shortly thereafter he was awarded the degree of Doctorate and "Livre-Doctore" from the Universidade Federal Rio de Janeiro in 1966, and was promoted to Full Professor by both the Universidade de Brasilia (1964) and the Universidade de São Paulo (1967). Professor Gottlieb was further honored with degrees of Professor and *Doctor Hoonoris Causa* from several Brazilian universities and the University of Hamburg. His scientific accomplishments are described in 611 papers, 20 book chapters, five books, well over 1109

communications to congresses and two patents. He has so far given 594 lectures, 414 in Brazil and 180 in 26 other countries.

Professor Gottlieb has received 17 national awards and two international awards, including the Third World Academy of Sciences Prize for Chemistry (1991) and the Pergamon Phytochemistry Prize for Creativity in Plant Biochemistry (1992). The latter was in recognition of his outstanding contributions to our knowledge

of the ecogeography, evolution and systematics of secondary plant metabolites.

In short, Professor Otto has had a long and distinguished scientific career, which continues unabated today. We wholeheartedly wish him great success in his current and future endeavors.

Lucia Maria Xavier Lopes (Guest Editor)  
Norman G. Lewis (Editor)