

PREFACE

In Honor of Professor Pierre Potier on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday

It is a great pleasure and honor for me to contribute a preface for this special issue of *Heterocycles*. The impact of a great pharmaceutical scientist may be measured by his contributions to welfare to mankind through the discovery of the potent medicine. Prof. Potier has made this task the successful development of anticancer drugs.

Professor Pierre Potier was born near Paris (Bois-Colombes), August 22, 1934.

He was graduated as a pharmacist in Paris in 1957 and obtained a PhD degree in Science in 1960. At his young age, he was interested in the isolation and structure determination of natural products as well as the biosynthesis of these compounds. He is the author of about 500 scientific publications.

He was appointed as a researcher at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), the most important research institute in France and also in Europe. He spent most of his carrier at the Institut de Chimie des Substances Naturelles in Gif-sur-Yvette.

He was the director of this prestigious institute during several years after being the co-director with Professor Sir Derek Barton.

He was also professor at the University of Orsay, at the Museum National d'Histoire Naturel in Paris, and at the Univeristy of Strathclyde in Glasgow (UK).

He received a lot of prices and awards in France and all other in the world, among them, the gold medal of the CNRS in 1998, a prestigious distinction which honoured only a few famous chemists such as Professors J.-M. Lehn and M. Julia.

In 2002, he won FIP Life Time Achievement in Pharmaceutical Sciences Award 2002, which is also the highest scientific award in International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP). He was a member of the French Academy of Sciences and also of five foreign Academies.

Professor Potier has made the great contribution in starting the international exchange programs. In 1980, he created with Professor Y. Ban the French-Japanese Society in Medicinal and Fine Chemistry and the related symposium, French-Japanese Symposium on Medicinal and Fine Chemistry, has been held at two times for every 3 years in both countries.

Some years later, he started the French-American Society of Chemistry with Professor E. J. Corey.

Professor Potier has also contributed in the synthetic organic and medicinal chemistry. The modification of the Polonovski reaction he discovered, now known as the Polonovski-Potier reaction is a milestone in the synthesis of numerous natural products following a biomimetic way.

He is known as a unique researcher who discovered two medicines, Navelbine® and Taxotere® two important anticancer drugs. The first one, Navelbine®, for the treatment of lung cancer was developed with the French company, Pierre Fabre. The isolation of desacetyl-baccatine from the leaves of European yew tree in Gif allowed the development of an efficient hemisynthesis of taxol with permits the discovery of Taxotere® in collaboration with Rhône-Poulenc-Rorer. Taxotere® is a major drug in anticancer therapy and used in many countries. We invited him to The 1st AFMC International Medicinal Chemistry Symposium (AIMECS 95) held in Tokyo, 1995 as a opening Plenary Lecturer, where he presented a topic “Anticancer Taxoids”.

With my best wishes to my best friend, Dr. Potier in celebration of his 70th birthday



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