

Editorial for the Special Issue Dedicated to Prof. A. Douglas Kinghorn

By: [Nicholas Oberlies](#) and Mario Figueroa

Oberlies, N., Figueroa, M. (2022). Editorial for the Special Issue Dedicated to Prof. A. Douglas Kinghorn. *Planta Medica*, 88(09/10), 696–697. <https://doi.org/10.1055/a-1882-1011>

Made available courtesy of Thieme Gruppe: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1055/a-1882-1011>

*****© Thieme Gruppe. Reprinted with permission. No further reproduction is authorized without written permission from Thieme Gruppe. This version of the document is not the version of record. Figures and/or pictures may be missing from this format of the document. *****

Abstract:

It is our great pleasure to present this special issue dedicated to Prof. A. Douglas Kinghorn on the occasion of his 75th birthday, in recognition of his renowned scientific contributions in pharmacognosy and dedicated service to academia and the global natural products and health communities. When we were first asked to write a brief history of his accomplishments, we had two thoughts. The first was: does anyone in this community not already know A. Douglas Kinghorn? It seems that everyone studying natural products has either met him in person, or heard him speak, or at the very least, read one of his over 400 manuscripts. The second thought was: how do we summarize his accomplishments concisely (even his CV is over 135 pages long!)?

Keywords: Prof. A. Douglas Kinghorn | editorial

Article:

Dear Reader,

It is our great pleasure to present this special issue dedicated to Prof. A. Douglas Kinghorn on the occasion of his 75th birthday, in recognition of his renowned scientific contributions in pharmacognosy and dedicated service to academia and the global natural products and health communities. When we were first asked to write a brief history of his accomplishments, we had two thoughts. The first was: does anyone in this community not already know A. Douglas Kinghorn? It seems that everyone studying natural products has either met him in person, or heard him speak, or at the very least, read one of his over 400 manuscripts. The second thought was: how do we summarize his accomplishments concisely (even his CV is over 135 pages long!)?

Born on 31 August 1947 in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, U. K., Dr. Kinghorn was among the first of the “baby boom generation”, and he spent his college years at the University of Bradford, earning his pharmacist degree in 1969, followed by an M.Sc. in Forensic Science at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow (1970), and his Ph.D. in Pharmacognosy at the School of Pharmacy at the University of London (now part of the University College London; UCL) in 1975, the latter under the direction of the late Professor Fred Evans. Meanwhile, from 1970 to

1971, he worked as an Analytical Chemist at Burrough's Wellcome Company in Dartford, Kent, U. K., and from 1971 to 1975 as a Teaching Fellow at the School of Pharmacy at the University of London, Brunswick Square, London, U. K.

After a 1-year postdoctoral position in the Department of Pharmacognosy of the School of Pharmacy at the University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi, USA, under the mentorship of the late Prof. N. J. Doorenbos (and where he met his future wife, Helen), Dr. Kinghorn moved to the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) to join the late Prof. N. R. Farnsworth and his growing team in the Department of Pharmacognosy and Pharmacology. He rose through the ranks, and in addition to eventually being a full professor by 1986, he had many other academic positions, including Associate Director of the Program for Collaborative Research in the Pharmaceutical Sciences, Assistant to the Director of the Research Resources Center, and finally as Assistant Head of the Department of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacognosy, College of Pharmacy. In 2004, he moved to Ohio State University (OSU) as the first Jack L. Beal Chair in the Division of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacognosy, and just over a month ago, on May 20th, he was given the permanent honorific title of Distinguished University Professor for his truly exceptional records in teaching, research, scholarly work, and service.

Over the years, Dr. Kinghorn's major research interests have been: (1) natural products drug discovery, involving the isolation, identification, structure elucidation, and bioassay of biologically active plant constituents, in particular those with antineoplastic, cancer chemopreventive, antimicrobial (antileishmanial), and skin irritant activities, and substances with a sweet taste and tastemodifying agents; (2) chemotaxonomy (comparative phytochemistry) of plant alkaloids and terpenoids; (3) phytochemical and toxicological studies on poisonous plants; (4) qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis of plant constituents; and (5) studies on the constituents of botanical dietary supplements (phytomedicines). His scientific work is compiled in more than 435 original peer-reviewed research articles, 64 review articles, 81 chapters in books, 37 edited, co-edited, or co-authored books, 43 book reviews, and 15 patents issued or published. His publications include several world-reference reviews promoting drug discovery from plants and other natural sources and has > 27 500 citations (h-index, 76; Scopus, Elsevier). He has presented over 320 lectures and seminars at international, national, and major regional scientific meetings and universities in more than 30 countries. Another amazing contribution of Dr. Kinghorn's has been the training of over 50 graduate students and hosting 70 postdoctoral, visiting, or research scientists, many of whom are now established scientists in the fields of pharmacognosy at various institutions in the U. S. and all over the world.

When we were soliciting contributions to this special issue, we were struck by the overwhelmingly positive responses. His impact on the field is evident from the breadth of contributions, with authors from literally all over the world, including Austria, Brazil, China, Greece, India, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, The Netherlands, and the United States; in more than one case, an author was so enthusiastic that more than one contribution was submitted! Many of us know him as an award winning scientist [including the Norman R. Farnsworth Research Achievement award from the American Society of Pharmacognosy in 2010 and the Egon Stahl Award in Gold from the GA (Society for Medicinal Plant and Natural Product Research) in 2020], or as the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Natural Products, now Emeritus Editor, for > 25 years. He has also received an honorary doctorate and honorary society memberships (University of Bradford, Sociedad Argentina de Investigaciones en Quimica Organica, American Society of Pharmacognosy, Phytochemical Society of Asia). However, if you ever traveled with him, you would know that he is a prolific and conscientious

reviewer and editor of manuscripts. Always gripping a manuscript and a red pen, even while sitting in an airport terminal, he would (and continues to) graciously mark up a manuscript, not only correcting errors, but also educating along the way, explaining his thought process, and pointing out how the logic should flow. While publishing over 400 manuscripts is a mark that few of us will ever achieve, we have no way of knowing how many other manuscripts, and by default, our collective literature, he influenced, certainly numbering into the thousands, via his careful and dutiful edits. At conferences, scientists would sheepishly come up to him, thanking him for all the work and effort he put into their manuscripts. Always deferential, Dr. Kinghorn would simply smile and say, with his polite British accent, it was “no trouble at all.”

When he learned that we were working on this Special Issue in his honor, at the bequest of his friends and colleagues associated with *Planta Medica*, he commented on how much work it was, and how he was not deserving. To this we respond, you are absolutely deserving, and it was “no trouble at all.”

We hope you enjoy the science in this issue.