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ANNIVERSARIES AND DATES

MARGERIS LIDAKS

(On the occasion of his 75th Birthday)

Professor Margeris Lidaks celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday on May 14, 2003. Prof. Lidaks, both erudite and friendly, is an outstanding heterocyclic chemist and a member of the editorial board of this journal.

Professor Lidaks obtained his degree in chemical engineering for the pharmaceutical industry while working at the Riga Pharmaceutical Chemistry Factory where he then continued as a senior chemist before advancing to head of laboratory. His profound knowledge of fine organic synthesis proved very useful in his work developing medicinal preparations.

Since 1958, Prof. Lidaks has worked at the Institute of Organic Synthesis of the Academy of Sciences of the Latvian SSR, now known as the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis. Here, he obtained his degrees as Candidate of Chemical Sciences and Doctor of Chemical Sciences and became a professor and active member of the Academy of Sciences of Latvia. During the years that saw the flowering of this institute, he long served as the deputy director of the institute for scientific investigation. Prof. Lidaks devoted much attention to furthering scientific investigation and the education of a highly well-rounded scientific staff. Many leading Latvian scientists proudly consider themselves to be his students.

Chemistry and medicine are highly intertwined and inseparable areas of his interest and investigations. The scientific work of Prof. Lidaks is a clear example of the combination of basic research with practical applied science. New drugs were discovered in the laboratory and brought to the patient's bedside and drug store counter. The major area of his studies was the development of new anticancer and antiviral drugs as the result of investigations in the field of aziridines, quinoline derivatives, pyrimidinylamino acids, purinylamino acids,

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peptides derived from these acids, nucleotides, and biopolymers. Among the drugs, which he synthesized and introduced into practice we find *Imiphos*, which contains ethylenimine and thiazolidine rings, *Nifuron*, which is a nitrofuran alkylating antitumor drug, and *Quinifuryl*, which is an antiblastocyte drug. The technology for the production of *Thio-TEPA*, *Cyclophosphane*, *Acyclovir*, *Thioguanine*, and *Cytarabine* was developed under his direction.

Together with S. A. Hiller and R. A. Zhuk, Prof. Lidaks developed a new area in the chemistry of nucleoside analogs, which led to a new antitumor drug *Ftorafur* with low toxicity used for treating a gastrointestinal and breast cancer. The firm Grindex still produces this drug and exports it to Russia, Japan, and other countries.

Professor Lidaks has also proposed an industrial method for the production of ethylenimine.

Professor Lidaks has had a successful tenure as Chairman of the Department of Chemical and Biological Sciences of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, was the Chief Editor of *Experimental and Clinical Pharmacotherapy* from 1976 to 1992, and has been a member of the editorial board of a number of scientific journals. He is the author of more than 400 publications, 90 inventor's certificates and patents, and five monographs. He has been designated an Honored Scientist and has received the State Prize, Grindel Medal, Hiller Medal, Vanag Prize in Chemistry, and Certificates of Honor of the Ministerial Cabinet of the Latvian Republic and Latvian Academy of Sciences.

The Editorial Board of Khimiya Geterotsiklicheskikh Soedinenii congratulates Prof. Lidaks on his birthday and wishes him long life, happiness, health, new ideas, and achievements. We thank him for his unstinting support and assistance.