

JOURNAL OF NATURAL PRODUCTS

© Copyright 2004 by the American Chemical Society and the American Society of Pharmacognosy

Volume 67, Number 2

February 2004

Editorial

Special Issue for Monroe Wall and Mansukh Wani

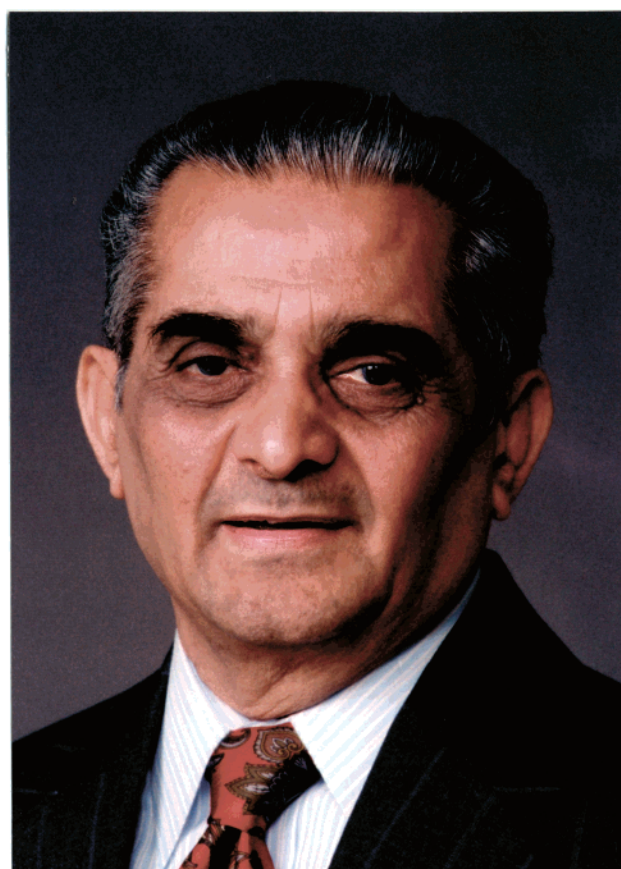


Figure 1. Dr. Monroe Wall (left) and Dr. Mansukh Wani (right). Photographs by John H. Theilgard (Research Triangle Institute).

We are very happy to bring to our readers this special issue of the *Journal of Natural Products*, which is dedicated to the scientific work on bioactive natural products of the late Dr. Monroe E. Wall and of Dr. Mansukh C. Wani, of Research Triangle Institute, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. Drs. Wall and Wani are best known for their two separate discoveries of the key plant-derived antineoplastic

compounds camptothecin and taxol (with the latter now known as paclitaxel and by the trade name Taxol). As indicated both on our present cover illustration and elaborated on in some detail in this issue, these discoveries have led to the introduction of four cancer chemotherapeutic drugs, inclusive of taxol itself, that have had a major influence on the lives of untold numbers of cancer patients

worldwide. It is notable that both camptothecin and taxol were found to elicit their antineoplastic activity by unprecedented mechanisms of action, leading to the publication of hundreds of related articles in the biomedical and clinical literature. This seminal work of the late Dr. Wall and of Dr. Wani has greatly stimulated the search for additional anticancer agents of terrestrial and marine origin by other natural product groups. Readers of this journal have seen many such articles on new camptothecin and taxol analogues with promising biological activity over the past few years.

This special issue has been in preparation for over a year, and many prominent natural products researchers who either work on bioactive natural products from plants or else have collaborated with Drs. Wall and Wani in the past were invited to contribute. We are extremely pleased at how willingly these colleagues agreed to provide articles for this special issue, and how unstinting they were with the considerable investment of time needed to write their articles, especially the long reviews. Many other colleagues expressed their great admiration for Drs. Wall and Wani, but were not able to write an appropriate article in time for this issue. As this project developed, we were constantly reminded of the very high esteem in which Drs. Wall and Wani are held by their colleagues and of the profound impact of their work. Monroe Wall, a special colleague with unusually strong willpower, was an extremely staunch and eloquent supporter of the natural products field. Mansukh Wani is more soft spoken, but an equally determined person, who served as the perfect complement to Dr. Wall in their wonderfully productive collaboration. By choosing to work well after normal retirement age, when they could easily have basked in the glow of their outstanding past

successes, Drs. Wall and Wani have served as an inspiration to all natural product researchers, whether beginning graduate students or seasoned veterans. Readers are referred to the article immediately following this editorial, by Drs. Nicholas Oberlies and David Kroll, for summaries of the illustrious careers of Drs. Wall and Wani, including their many awards and honors. In this special issue, we are especially pleased to be able to include the contributions by the eminent scientists Dr. Susan Band Horwitz and Dr. Samuel J. Danishevsky.

Drs. Wall and Wani have been strong supporters of the *Journal of Natural Products* through the publication of numerous papers on bioactive compounds over the years. Moreover, Dr. Wall (1994–1998) and Dr. Wani (2002–2006) have both provided wise counsel as members of our Editorial Advisory Board. We are grateful to the co-publishers of this journal, the American Chemical Society and the American Society of Pharmacognosy, for their constant support for this special issue, from its conceptual stages to its completion on the Web and in print. It has indeed been a pleasure and a privilege for us to serve as the joint editors for this initiative in honor of two true gentlemen of science.

A. Douglas Kinghorn, Editor-in-Chief

University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

Richard G. Powell, Associate Editor

*National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research,
USDA, Peoria, Illinois*

NP030539L