

## Preface

### Samuel J. Danishefsky

You hold in your hands a special issue of *Tetrahedron* dedicated to Professor Samuel J. Danishefsky, currently on the faculties of the Sloan-Kettering Memorial Cancer Center (where he is the Eugene Kettering Professor) and Columbia University. All of the papers in this issue have been contributed by Sam's former students and postdoctoral colleagues, not only to celebrate his sixtieth birthday, but also to express our admiration of his extraordinary scientific accomplishments and to offer our thanks to a special mentor.

The constant search for ever greater challenges has been and remains an inspirational aspect of Professor Danishefsky's work. He has set a clear standard – a tough one, to be sure – for those who aspire to leave a mark on organic chemistry. There can be little doubt that this powerful influence has played a major role in making the Danishefsky group a stimulating, challenging, and enjoyable place to be. Professor Danishefsky has always fostered an environment of congenial intensity among his coworkers. In addition to emphasizing the pursuit of excellence and rigor, he has always taken care to promote the individual's efforts within and without the group. Indeed, practically every important discovery of the group was embellished by the name of the coworker associated with it, a subtle reminder that our efforts were appreciated. For instance, the world knows (E)-1-methoxy-3-trimethylsilyloxy-1,3-butadiene as the "Danishefsky's diene", but to him and to us it was always the "Kitahara diene". In turn, we appreciate Professor Danishefsky's efforts on our behalf, his encouragement to do well, his wisdom, and his observations on how to live the life of a scientist and a scholar – as made explicit in conversation and implied by action.

Professor Danishefsky's achievements have received an enviable measure of formal recognition. Most recently, he has been honored with the Wolf Prize, the *Tetrahedron* Prize, and the Hudson Award of the Carbohydrate Division of the American Chemical Society. These join such earlier kudos as the Aldrich Award for Creativity in Organic Chemistry, the Guenther Award in Natural Products Synthesis, and election to the National Academy of Sciences. To these voices, we are now privileged to add our own.

This project began at the suggestion of John Haseltine, and was facilitated by Professors Derek Barton and Harry Wasserman. This special issue was edited by Professor Stephen Martin and we are also indebted to Ms. Teresa Winterringer for her cheerful assistance throughout. To all of them, we offer our thanks.

Congratulations, Sam, on a terrific first act.

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