

Special Issue in Honor of Prof. Ik-Soo Lee



It is with great honor and pleasure that we present this dedicatory letter for a special issue of the *Natural Product Sciences*, dedicated to the honorable Professor Ik-Soo Lee of the College of Pharmacy, Chonnam National University. We would like to express our deep sense of gratitude to all the authors and co-authors who have contributed to this special issue.

Professor Ik-Soo Lee was born in Seoul in 1957. He earned his B.S. degree in Pharmacy at Sungkyunkwan University in 1980, and then he enrolled at the College of Pharmacy, Seoul National University, where he completed his M.S. in 1982 under the guidance of Professor Sang-Sup Lee. Upon receiving his master's degree, he worked at the Medical Information Department of Daewoong Pharmaceutical until he proceeded to the University of Mississippi in 1985 to pursue a doctorate. He obtained his Ph.D. in Pharmacognosy in 1990 under the direction of the late Professor Charles D. Hufford. During his graduate studies, Professor Lee especially established his major research area of "microbial biotransformation" contributing to pharmacognosy and natural products chemistry. After starting his postdoctoral career as a research associate with Professor Charles J. Sih at the College of Pharmacy, University of Wisconsin-Madison, he joined the A. Douglas Kinghorn group at the College of Pharmacy, University of Illinois at Chicago in 1991, and he has made significant contributions to isolation and structure elucidation of natural products as a postdoctoral and later as a Research Assistant Professor until early 1995. In the same year, he joined the College of Pharmacy at Chonnam National University faculty as an Assistant Professor, where he spent his entire distinguished career as an excellent mentor and natural products scientist. He was appointed to an Associate Professor in 1999 and a Full Professor in 2005.

During his tenure for nearly three decades, Professor Lee has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to undergraduate and graduate education as well as research areas in pharmacognosy and natural products chemistry. He has guided and inspired his students, many of whom have independently continued on to academic and industrial positions with expertise in natural products research. In addition to his educational contribution, Professor Lee excelled as an outstanding leader in microbial biotransformation studies on bioactive natural products at home and abroad. He has presented research on the production and structural elucidation of numerous unknown metabolites or derivatives of natural products that were transformed by various microbes in the SCI grade esteemed journals.

While at Chonnam National University, he served as Director of the Natural Products Drug Discovery and Development Center (2008-2010), Research Institute of Drug Development (2009-2011), and Medicinal Botanical Garden (2011-2012), and he also served as Associate Dean (2012-2014), Dean (2016-2018) of the College of Pharmacy. He served as Editor-in-Chief (2000-2001) and President (2016) of the Korean Society of Pharmacognosy (KSP). Most notable in his contributions to the KSP as President was his highly respected role in establishing and laying the groundwork for KSP's joining as one of the International Congress on Natural Products Research (ICNPR) co-organizers. Since 2020, he has continued to support the international outreach and interactions of KSP as Co-Chair of the International Relationships Committee of the American Society of Pharmacognosy (ASP). In addition, he served as Vice President (2017-2018) of the Pharmaceutical Society of Korea (PSK) and has served on the Board of Directors of the same society from 2021 to the present.

His outstanding contributions and achievements were recognized through several awards and honors, including Best Science and Technology Thesis Award by the Korean Federation of Science and Technology Societies (2005), Grand Academic Award by KSP (2017), Ministerial Commendation by the Ministry of Health and Welfare (2018), and Presidential Citation by the Korean government (2022).

We hope this Editorial provides readers with at least some recognition of Prof. Lee's invaluable contributions and ongoing dedication to academia and the natural products community. We feel highly honored to have been with Professor Ik-Soo Lee who served as an inspirational advisor and scientist, and above all, a respectable human being with generosity and integrity for nearly three decades. We also look forward to his continued active involvement in scientific and public activities. We all join in wishing him good health and happiness.

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