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In honour of Professor Leaf Huang, recipient of the Journal of Drug Targeting's life-time achievement award for 2018

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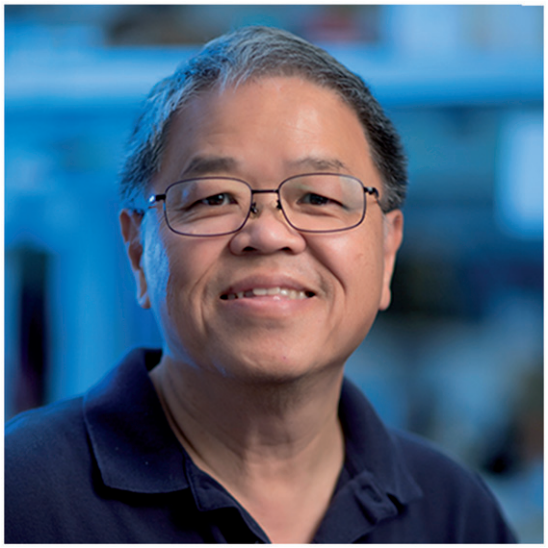
EDITORIAL

In honour of Professor Leaf Huang, recipient of the Journal of Drug Targeting's life-time achievement award for 2018



A photograph of Professor Leaf Huang, recipient of the Journal of Drug Targeting's Lifetime Achievement Award for 2018.

It is time for this *Journal* to honour the recipient of this year's Life-time Achievement Award. The *Journal of Drug Targeting*'s Life-time Achievement Award is an un-solicited award given annually to honour the *sustained* outstanding scientific achievements of a researcher working in the broad fields of drug delivery and targeting. This year's winner, as in previous years, was selected by a scientific panel comprising members of the Editorial board and representatives from Taylor and Francis (part of Informa Healthcare UK), the publishers of *Journal of Drug Targeting*.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that Professor Leaf Huang, of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), North Carolina, USA, is the recipient of this year's *Journal of Drug Targeting's* Lifetime Achievement Award for his life-long research into drug delivery and targeting systems, especially for gene- and nucleic acid-based therapies. Professor Huang is currently the Fred Eshelman Distinguished Professor at the Eshelman School of Pharmacy at UNC-CH and was previously a faculty member at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (1976–1991) and at the University of Pittsburgh (1991–2005). It was in July 2005 that he moved to his present affiliation at the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy to become chair of the Division of Molecular Pharmaceutics, a position he had held until 2012. However, Leaf began his academic life by graduating in 1968 with a physics major (even though he preferred biology!) from the National Taiwan University, Taipei. He then obtained a PhD degree in biophysics from the Michigan State University in 1974 before first learning about liposomes as a post-doctoral fellow in Richard Pagano's research group at Carnegie Institute of Washington, USA.

How important that first encounter with liposomes must have been as Professor Huang then went onto become an important pioneer of liposomal delivery of genes and other nucleic acid-based therapies including antisense, siRNA and immune-stimulatory oligonucleotides as well as other small molecular weight drugs. He has published well over 500 research articles and patents with a *h*-index of 115 (as per his google scholar profile). He has published in many of the top scientific journals including *Nature, Nature Medicine, Nature Communications* and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. The high quality of his research is further attested to by his papers receiving well over 52,000 citations to date. His work is clearly translational and clinically relevant and as such, he has been involved in setting up several business enterprises including Lipogen, Rx Therapeutics, Lipella and PDS Biotechnology. In his long and illustrious career, Prof Huang has also mentored well over 100 graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, many of whom have gone on to have successful academic careers of their own.

Indeed, I am extremely grateful to one of Leaf's former graduate students, Professor Shyh-Dar Li, of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of British Columbia, Vancouver BC, Canada, for agreeing to be the Guest Editor and for compiling this special issue in honour of the awardee. The print copy of this special issue, along with a commemorative plaque will be awarded to Professor Huang as part of the award.

Professor Shyh-Dar Li has assembled an excellent combination of reviews and original articles that give a flavour of the type of research Professor Leaf Huang and his group has been conducting over the many years of his service in academia. In this special issue, Shyh-Dar Li's own Guest Editorial highlights the research achievements of Leaf Huang that have led up to this prestigious award from the *Journal of Drug Targeting* and I refer readers to his excellent editorial for further details.

As you will see from Shyh-Dar Li's Guest Editorial and my own brief comments above, that, without a shadow of doubt, Prof Leaf Huang is an extremely well deserving recipient of this award. The *Journal of Drug Targeting* is therefore very delighted to award its Life-time Achievement Award for 2018 to Professor Leaf Huang for his many outstanding contributions to drug delivery and targeting. Our congratulations to you, Leaf and as our best wishes to you and your family for the future!

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